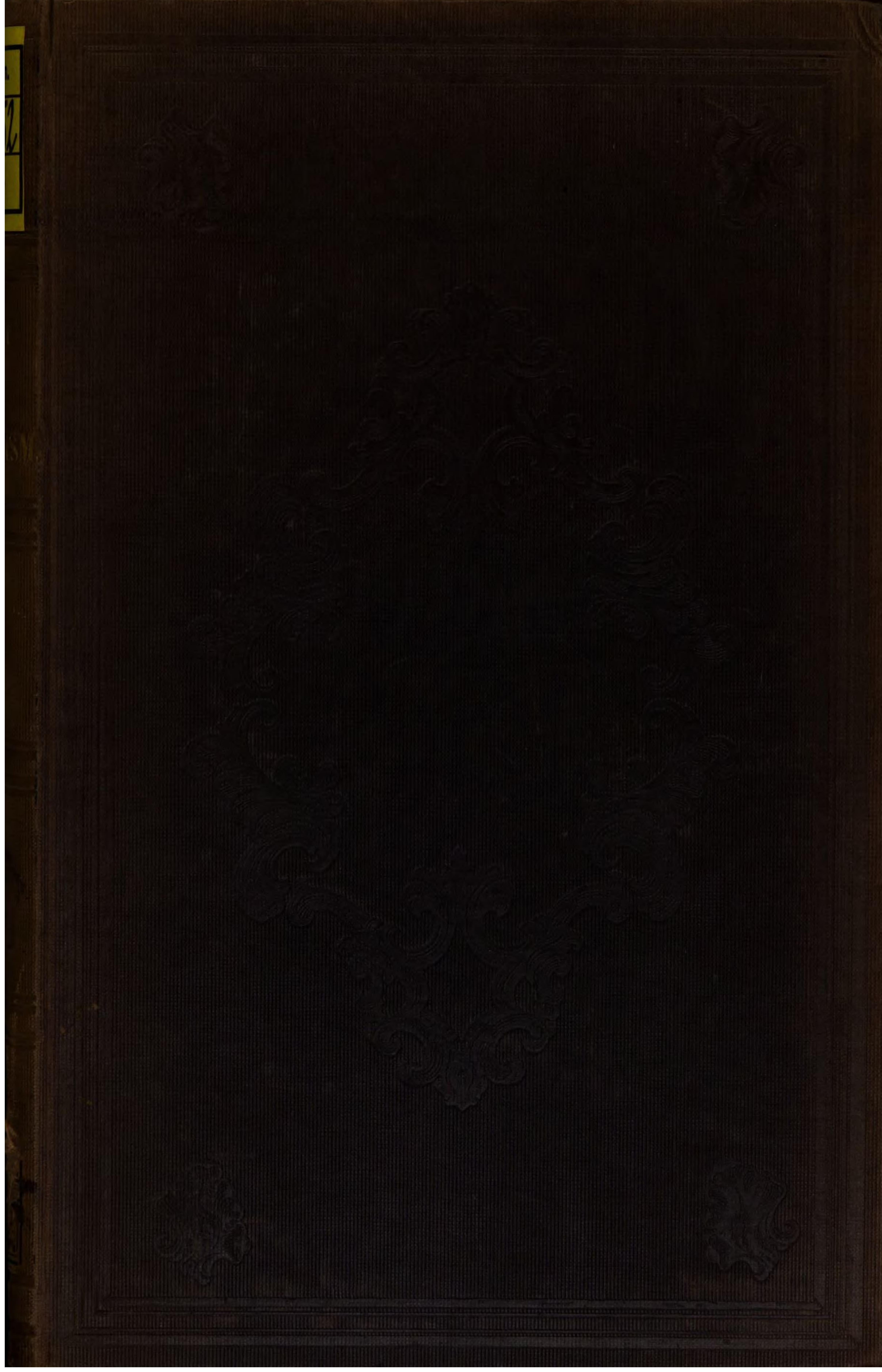




Polem.

1452^{ad}

Kemp.

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1452^{aa}

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AN EXPOSITION
OF SOME OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN
SCRIPTURE AND CALVINISM,
WITH REFERENCE TO
THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH,
AND TO
THE REPLY OF MR. SCOTT TO BISHOP TOMLINE;
INTENDED TO PROMOTE
THE ATTAINMENT OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

~~~~~  
BY THE REV. E. C. KEMP, M.A.  
RECTOR OF WHISSONSETT; DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE  
DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE; AND HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT OF  
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TO THE  
RIGHT REV. EDWARD STANLEY, D. D.,  
LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

It is with no ordinary gratification that I enjoy the honourable privilege of dedicating to my Diocesan some portion of the fruits of my ordination vow, to do what in me lies, “to banish and drive away erroneous and strange doctrines” from the souls under my care.

This gratification, my Lord, consists not so much in the delight which I experience in “rendering honour to whom honour is due,”—nor even in receiving the approbation of my ecclesiastical superior for the intentions which I have professed,—



as in beholding the encouragement your Lordship extends to the investigation of religious truth, and the public sanction you bestow on a particular profession of faith which is of supreme importance—not to mention the consequent ambition which I feel, that if I have successfully executed the purpose I have had in view, my efforts will be rendered, by your Lordship's influence under the divine blessing, extensively useful in the diffusion of evangelical knowledge.

It cannot be unknown to your Lordship that there are professors of Christianity, amiable and pious persons, who seem to be of opinion that the correction of doctrinal errors can be effected solely by the exhibition in the Clergy of the Christian virtues of peace and charity—and others who maintain that no interference is allowable with the opinions which a professing Christian may conscientiously entertain. Though I have myself been constantly opposed to every restraint upon liberty of conscience in any order of the people, but such as I think true religion dictates, yet in perfect consistency with this sentiment, it has been with me an inveterate conviction that Christian love is incompetent to the removal of misapprehension on points of doctrine, unless among the acts of benevolence be included the inculcation of sound



divinity in the form of Controversy, and that there are innumerable instances where disputation is proper and necessary for the maintenance and advancement of scriptural truth and the promotion of the temporal and eternal interests of mankind. I consider I am not an unfaithful minister of the Word in holding this opinion, and I have never for one instant doubted that any divine, much inferior to your Lordship in learning and experience, who understood the various offices of the Christian Ministry, could labour under an impression of a contrary nature. But while opposite opinions are not uncommon in the world, I hail every instance of their discountenance in high and holy places with satisfaction and delight. And I esteem it not one of the least advantages of the permission to commend the present Volume to your Lordship's protection, that the too general assertion that Apostolic liberality is of a more unlimited description has received, in that act itself, additional repression from your Lordship's example.

But to introduce to the public, under your Lordship's auspices, a treatise on doctrines that concern the unity of the Church, the salvation of men, and, incomparably above the majority of all agitated points, the honour and glory of God—which it is one of the most awful duties of his rational



creatures, and of his ministers in particular, to guard against the indignities of misrepresentation with the very extremes of jealousy—must far outweigh every other consideration. It has long been to me a matter of surprise, and deeper regret than I could easily express, that the Calvinistic Controversy should have been suffered to continue in a state unfavourable, in my opinion, to “*the juster side.*” The able pen of a contemporary writer has recently been, I believe, very successful in determining the doctrine of the primitive Church, on the subject of which I principally treat. It still, however, according to my judgment, remained to attack the most objectionable doctrines of Calvin on that only field, where I have always thought they can be *effectually* opposed—the pages of inspiration. I hope that I shall not have disgraced your Lordship’s patronage in the encounter. I confidently expect that I shall be found to have made considerable additions to the arguments of previous anti-Calvinistic writers, and supplied in places, some that are stronger than those on which we have been much accustomed to depend—and I am not aware that I have omitted any considerations of importance in favour of my antagonists, which could throw discredit on the general view that I have taken. I can, I trust, safely affirm, that my sole object throughout the whole discussion



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Of the manner of conducting my argument I now leave your Lordship and the public to judge, with no further observation than the assertion of a hope that your Lordship will not detect in my pages any of the acrimony for which theological disputes are reported, with too much justice, to be remarkable, and that while I have reasons for thinking that your Lordship insists as well on Christian charity as on truth, I trust that I have



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Deeply impressed with a sense of your Lordship's kindness,

I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's most obedient  
humble servant,

E. C. KEMP.

*Whissonsett,*

*November 4, 1842.*



## PREFACE.

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I THINK it is impossible for any one desirous of the dissemination of Christian truth, and the diffusion of its spiritual influences throughout the earth, to observe the religious dissensions of those who have enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education, as well as of the unlearned, without the profoundest regret. There is great difficulty in these days of religious confusion, in selecting the most eligible points for examination. Nothing, I believe, is much more indispensable than a complete exposure of that delusion which considers the Bible, even on matters of greatest usefulness, a book of easy interpretation, and ascribes to its perusal in our native language by the more illiterate—and to prayer for divine guidance, all that is absolutely necessary for the discovery of truth in its main particulars, beyond probability of error. No doubt prayer is requisite to the just perception of the truths of the Gospel. A disposition to seek God sincerely may be obtained by its means,—a correct judgment of



the knowledge communicated to the disciple, may be conferred upon him in answer to its exercise—and a heart to receive the truth whenever it is clearly proposed to him;—these, and some others, may be the benefits to be derived from devout and faithful applications to the throne of grace; but it is contrary, both to experience and to reason, to suppose that all which need be done by the learner of God's word and will, is to read the Bible, and to pray that God will lead him infallibly into a right understanding of almost all that is serviceable to his salvation in its contents. As to experience in the matter, daily observation testifies that the simple exercises of reading and prayer, with a full reliance on private judgment, are insufficient means of decision according to the truth. Countless multitudes of all sects read and pray, and hold the teaching of ministers in more or less contempt, though they attend their ministrations; and yet they differ materially in a vast variety of ways, while all of them profess to deduce their opinions from divine revelation. Perhaps it may be alleged that they do not pray as they ought, and this accounts sufficiently for the disagreement. But have we so unfavourable an opinion of numerous bodies of professing Christians, as that they do not contain a considerable number of members that are fervent and sincere



in their supplications for the light which they think God gives by immediate inspiration? Indeed, I believe the system of reading and prayer, excepting the misapplication of the latter, is generally practised, as far as we can charitably judge in almost as much perfection as possible; and it certainly has not answered for the discovery of the truth in anything like its unity, or for the production of the union in spirit and society, which are so desirable among the professors of the faith. The result of these private researches is not at all to be wondered at, as I shall endeavour to evince when I consider the reason of the case. It may be regarded as one of the evidences, that the Bible is very liable to be misinterpreted;—for it is not in the remotest degree conceivable, that if the Bible were an easy book to comprehend in its most important doctrines, that there could be all or any of the differences which exist about them,—with incalculably less trouble and pains than many persons now bestow upon its study. There cannot be the least doubt in the world that a book might be written with such plainness and simplicity, that all persons of common understanding, with but little proficiency in scholarship, who read it, would agree together in all, or at least almost all its particulars. It is very evident from the



consequences of private research, that the Bible is not by any means a book at least of that description. It is not however to be denied, that all the saving truths of Scripture are intelligible to the meanest capacities, if they are brought before them with perspicuity and precision. But it is certain to any who are acquainted with the character of the sacred writings, that the doctrines of Scripture are not stated in such a manner as may not easily strike different minds in different lights ; and that it is, as I have already intimated, contrary to reason, to imagine that a multitude of persons of various attainments and views, dispositions and prejudices, would not interpret it by itself in a great diversity of ways. It is manifest to those who have examined and reflected upon the composition of the Bible, that in its epistolary department, more particularly, it was written in adaptation to a great variety of the existing circumstances of converts in the primitive times, and not directed *immediately* to the object either of converting unbelievers, or of suiting the condition of any Christian community at any subsequent period—that the fundamental truths of our religion have from that section of the Bible at least, to be collected from incidental notices and allusions—that though the four Gospels are more easily apprehended in several respects, yet that



they relate to times before the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost; and that, therefore, there is some difficulty in harmonizing the two great divisions of the Volume—that the system of our faith and practice is not indeed derivable from any one part of the Holy Book, but has to be deduced from collation of multitudes of passages one with another, which often modify our views of each in a state of separation, and by elicitation of that sense which is in perfect accordance with the rest—that this is not to be done to a moral certainty of escaping error without much toil and care—without a knowledge of the manner of using books to advantage—without study and the habits induced by well regulated study, and without the tact which a good education is one of the best means of supplying—as well as by a certain acquaintance with the history and condition of the Jews under the Old Testament, and of the Christians in the Apostolic age, as clues to the import of particular passages—and of larger divisions of the Volume—not forgetting the light to be borrowed from almost contemporary writers, and the assistance to be obtained from knowing the original language at least of the New Testament, which, notwithstanding the admirable Translation we possess, may be incredibly great to those who have even a little experience in its utility;



and, "although the last not least," the ingenious arguments of those who are "of the contrary part," and under a solemn sense of duty have expended no contemptible erudition and talents in its vindication. Till these matters are acquired and known, or at least profited by, mediately or immediately, it is impossible for any person to be well assured that there is not much wisdom within his reach which would shame his superficial knowledge, and confound his presumptuous judgment. They all, at the very least, are necessary for the investigation of the sense of Scripture, in such a manner *as to be as certain as men ought, that they have not formed important misconceptions.* And these are acquirements which are not granted merely to our prayers. Other means besides prayer have to be used for their attainment, and they are not matters easily achieved. In these reflections we perceive, if I mistake not, a faint exhibition of the internal evidence of the Bible's being "hard to be understood." It accounts for men's not agreeing about it, *as they would do, if* it were written with a very imaginable degree of plainness. It shows too the presumption and awful responsibility of those persons who have encouraged uninformed men to imagine that all that they need do is to read their Bibles in their vernacular tongue and pray for instruction, and thus involved them in almost



all kinds of heresy. I can not perhaps deny that it lies within the limits of absolute possibility that a well disposed and pious reader of his Bible might arrive at a clear understanding of all the most important and necessary truths in the Book without any assistance whatever from the various branches of profane and sacred literature. But it is perfectly unreasonable to suppose from the composition of the Bible that it should be of common occurrence ; and experience, even where all men derive *some* previous information from the Christian world, sustains the truth of the assertion. And even if the acquirement of this knowledge be attainable without a miracle, it is undeniable that it is perfectly impossible, without such assistance for the reader of merely the English Bible to *ascertain* that he has not greatly erred in his opinions, though they happen to be correct. This certainty can be acquired only by either ourselves knowing all the main facts and circumstances which affect the views which the Bible presents, or by inquiring of other persons who have made themselves masters of the subject, and by putting them to a satisfactory probation. Such is the difficulty of searching into the very foundation of every true doctrine and of guarding against false impressions. Let every man read his Bible if possible for obvious reasons. He may thus examine for his own



satisfaction into the doctrines of his ministers—that he may judge as well as he is able “whether *these things be so*”—(Acts, xvii. 11)—He may revive the impressions which he has already received—he may even increase his store of divine knowledge—on the sound principles which he may have previously imbibed. These things he “ought to do,” but there is another which he ought “not to leave undone”—to inquire of those who have the best opportunities of searching most fully and minutely into the means of true interpretation. Thus they might arrive at as much correctness and security as possible. And the difficulty of this sure interpretation shows also in some degree the wisdom of God in providing a ministry of his word; in ordaining to be set apart an order of men who devote the best portion of their lives to the use of the means necessary to inquire into the principles of interpreting the Bible, in whole or in part. It shows the piety of the founders of the universities and the schools where the youth intended for the ministry may be educated for the due performance of its functions—and it no less evinces (“*sit verbo venia*”) the enthusiasm of that multitude who *virtually*, if not literally, decry these institutions as vain and useless for purposes of instruction in theological knowledge, while they advocate the extravagant notion that all that is required for



such information is to read the English Bible, and receive divine illumination. And for want of attending to the utility of such appointments human and divine—for want of properly consulting the ministers of the Church, for want perhaps occasionally in some degree of due preparation in the ministers themselves, but certainly for want of that private consultation of ministers and disputation with them, that diligent inquiry at their hands which would extract from them the advantages of their labours, and would eventually, in all probability, give satisfaction to every humble and devout inquirer;—it is for want of these things that great numbers of “wise in their own conceits,” with “a little learning” too highly appreciated, and with “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,” millions of sincerely praying and earnestly seeking persons, but seeking not in the appointed ways, have not been able to find God as he might and ought to be found, and have arrived at very discordant conclusions from merely reading their Bibles, or even from adopting exclusively writers of one sect or party, and hearing pretenders to preach with little or no qualifications for the office. By using every practicable means, and every available assistance, we might arrive at substantial agreement. It is vain to object that there are still differences among



Polem.

1452<sup>aa</sup>

Kemp.







Polem.

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the knowledge communicated to the disciple, may be conferred upon him in answer to its exercise—and a heart to receive the truth whenever it is clearly proposed to him;—these, and some others, may be the benefits to be derived from devout and faithful applications to the throne of grace; but it is contrary, both to experience and to reason, to suppose that all which need be done by the learner of God's word and will, is to read the Bible, and to pray that God will lead him infallibly into a right understanding of almost all that is serviceable to his salvation in its contents. As to experience in the matter, daily observation testifies that the simple exercises of reading and prayer, with a full reliance on private judgment, are insufficient means of decision according to the truth. Countless multitudes of all sects read and pray, and hold the teaching of ministers in more or less contempt, though they attend their ministrations; and yet they differ materially in a vast variety of ways, while all of them profess to deduce their opinions from divine revelation. Perhaps it may be alleged that they do not pray as they ought, and this accounts sufficiently for the disagreement. But have we so unfavourable an opinion of numerous bodies of professing Christians, as that they do not contain a considerable number of members that are fervent and sincere

in their supplications for the light which they think God gives by immediate inspiration? Indeed, I believe the system of reading and prayer, excepting the misapplication of the latter, is generally practised, as far as we can charitably judge in almost as much perfection as possible; and it certainly has not answered for the discovery of the truth in anything like its unity, or for the production of the union in spirit and society, which are so desirable among the professors of the faith. The result of these private researches is not at all to be wondered at, as I shall endeavour to evince when I consider the reason of the case. It may be regarded as one of the evidences, that the Bible is very liable to be misinterpreted;—for it is not in the remotest degree conceivable, that if the Bible were an easy book to comprehend in its most important doctrines, that there could be all or any of the differences which exist about them,—with incalculably less trouble and pains than many persons now bestow upon its study. There cannot be the least doubt in the world that a book might be written with such plainness and simplicity, that all persons of common understanding, with but little proficiency in scholarship, who read it, would agree together in all, or at least almost all its particulars. It is very evident from the

consequences of private research, that the Bible is not by any means a book at least of that description. It is not however to be denied, that all the saving truths of Scripture are intelligible to the meanest capacities, if they are brought before them with perspicuity and precision. But it is certain to any who are acquainted with the character of the sacred writings, that the doctrines of Scripture are not stated in such a manner as may not easily strike different minds in different lights ; and that it is, as I have already intimated, contrary to reason, to imagine that a multitude of persons of various attainments and views, dispositions and prejudices, would not interpret it by itself in a great diversity of ways. It is manifest to those who have examined and reflected upon the composition of the Bible, that in its epistolary department, more particularly, it was written in adaptation to a great variety of the existing circumstances of converts in the primitive times, and not directed *immediately* to the object either of converting unbelievers, or of suiting the condition of any Christian community at any subsequent period—that the fundamental truths of our religion have from that section of the Bible at least, to be collected from incidental notices and allusions—that though the four Gospels are more easily apprehended in several respects, yet that

they relate to times before the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost; and that, therefore, there is some difficulty in harmonizing the two great divisions of the Volume—that the system of our faith and practice is not indeed derivable from any one part of the Holy Book, but has to be deduced from collation of multitudes of passages one with another, which often modify our views of each in a state of separation, and by elicitation of that sense which is in perfect accordance with the rest—that this is not to be done to a moral certainty of escaping error without much toil and care—without a knowledge of the manner of using books to advantage—without study and the habits induced by well regulated study, and without the tact which a good education is one of the best means of supplying—as well as by a certain acquaintance with the history and condition of the Jews under the Old Testament, and of the Christians in the Apostolic age, as clues to the import of particular passages—and of larger divisions of the Volume—not forgetting the light to be borrowed from almost contemporary writers, and the assistance to be obtained from knowing the original language at least of the New Testament, which, notwithstanding the admirable Translation we possess, may be incredibly great to those who have even a little experience in its utility;

and, "although the last not least," the ingenious arguments of those who are "of the contrary part," and under a solemn sense of duty have expended no contemptible erudition and talents in its vindication. Till these matters are acquired and known, or at least profited by, mediately or immediately, it is impossible for any person to be well assured that there is not much wisdom within his reach which would shame his superficial knowledge, and confound his presumptuous judgment. They all, at the very least, are necessary for the investigation of the sense of Scripture, in such a manner *as to be as certain as men ought, that they have not formed important misconceptions.* And these are acquirements which are not granted merely to our prayers. Other means besides prayer have to be used for their attainment, and they are not matters easily achieved. In these reflections we perceive, if I mistake not, a faint exhibition of the internal evidence of the Bible's being "hard to be understood." It accounts for men's not agreeing about it, *as they would do, if* it were written with a very imaginable degree of plainness. It shows too the presumption and awful responsibility of those persons who have encouraged uninformed men to imagine that all that they need do is to read their Bibles in their vernacular tongue and pray for instruction, and thus involved them in almost

all kinds of heresy. I can not perhaps deny that it lies within the limits of absolute possibility that a well disposed and pious reader of his Bible might arrive at a clear understanding of all the most important and necessary truths in the Book without any assistance whatever from the various branches of profane and sacred literature. But it is perfectly unreasonable to suppose from the composition of the Bible that it should be of common occurrence ; and experience, even where all men derive *some* previous information from the Christian world, sustains the truth of the assertion. And even if the acquirement of this knowledge be attainable without a miracle, it is undeniable that it is perfectly impossible, without such assistance for the reader of merely the English Bible to *ascertain* that he has not greatly erred in his opinions, though they happen to be correct. This certainty can be acquired only by either ourselves knowing all the main facts and circumstances which affect the views which the Bible presents, or by inquiring of other persons who have made themselves masters of the subject, and by putting them to a satisfactory probation. Such is the difficulty of searching into the very foundation of every true doctrine and of guarding against false impressions. Let every man read his Bible if possible for obvious reasons. He may thus examine for his own

satisfaction into the doctrines of his ministers—that he may judge as well as he is able “whether *these things be so*”—(Acts, xvii. 11)—He may revive the impressions which he has already received—he may even increase his store of divine knowledge—on the sound principles which he may have previously imbibed. These things he “ought to do,” but there is another which he ought “not to leave undone”—to inquire of those who have the best opportunities of searching most fully and minutely into the means of true interpretation. Thus they might arrive at as much correctness and security as possible. And the difficulty of this sure interpretation shows also in some degree the wisdom of God in providing a ministry of his word; in ordaining to be set apart an order of men who devote the best portion of their lives to the use of the means necessary to inquire into the principles of interpreting the Bible, in whole or in part. It shows the piety of the founders of the universities and the schools where the youth intended for the ministry may be educated for the due performance of its functions—and it no less evinces (“*sit verbo venia*”) the enthusiasm of that multitude who *virtually*, if not literally, decry these institutions as vain and useless for purposes of instruction in theological knowledge, while they advocate the extravagant notion that all that is required for

such information is to read the English Bible, and receive divine illumination. And for want of attending to the utility of such appointments human and divine—for want of properly consulting the ministers of the Church, for want perhaps occasionally in some degree of due preparation in the ministers themselves, but certainly for want of that private consultation of ministers and disputation with them, that diligent inquiry at their hands which would extract from them the advantages of their labours, and would eventually, in all probability, give satisfaction to every humble and devout inquirer;—it is for want of these things that great numbers of “wise in their own conceits,” with “a little learning” too highly appreciated, and with “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,” millions of sincerely praying and earnestly seeking persons, but seeking not in the appointed ways, have not been able to find God as he might and ought to be found, and have arrived at very discordant conclusions from merely reading their Bibles, or even from adopting exclusively writers of one sect or party, and hearing pretenders to preach with little or no qualifications for the office. By using every practicable means, and every available assistance, we might arrive at substantial agreement. It is vain to object that there are still differences among

learned men, This is no impeachment of learning itself. It shows what every one knows who is at all acquainted with the present state of literature and science; that there are great diversities of attainments both in subjects as well as in departments connected with the same subjects, among those who may all nevertheless be entitled to the name of learned; that the disagreements arise from their having attended too much to matters foreign to their professions, or too little to those branches of the professions which would conduce most certainly to a concord of opinion. It is contrary to reason to suppose that the Bible is not capable of a certain indisputable interpretation on all points of doctrine which it was given to instruct us in, and equally contrary to it to suppose that if all the means of interpreting it are judiciously used, that all well disposed and pious minds would not arrive in time at a high degree of unanimity—(Acts ii. 42, iv. 32), and be instrumental to influencing multitudes that are now incapable of any true and fixed impression, surrounded, as they are, by the most visible and opiniative inconsistency and contradiction. It is to be hoped that the day is approaching, and that there are some indications of its dawn, when neither educated nor uneducated men shall confound together, in one indiscriminate mass, both

ignorance and knowledge—a licentiousness which, engendered by a spirit of schism, discontent and insubordination, I would say, rather than of mere dissent, has tended to bring the ministry of the Church, with all their labours and education, into disrepute, and to undermine the foundation of that apostolic appointment to their office, which, if duly exercised and fully carried out, is the grand means, under God, of excluding unchristian divisions and discord from our profession, and a licentiousness, which has been the fruitful parent of almost all the confusion and hostility among professing Christians, now pervading the empire, and bids fair, unless overruled by Divine Providence, to propagate the same dissensions and divisions through the world.

The full exposure of this error would be laying the axe to the root of the bitter tree of disunion. The practical results of the error, and the abuse of learning, appear however more prominent, and to require more immediate correction. By attempting this too, we show, in fact, that something more is wanted than the English Bible and Prayer. Thus two objects are secured in one. And in choosing particular doctrines, perhaps few or none would claim an earlier attention than those which have been forced upon my own. On few points of revealed doctrine are there, probably,

more grievous differences than concerning the peculiarities of real and nominal Calvinism. I make this distinction, because some doctrines which receive that appellation are not to be found in the recorded opinions of the writer from whom it is derived. It is sufficiently lamentable that some of the lessons which were actually taught in the school of Geneva should even yet occasion disagreements among the ministers and other members of our Church; but the extremes of impiety to which its distinctive tenets have been naturally carried by less informed teachers and disciples, are, in my view, among the most horrible appearances of the religious aspect of the times, particularly in the poorer and uneducated classes of the community, who are an easy prey to the various pretenders to inspiration, and very often the easier, in proportion as those pretenders are the more extravagant. And it is not unreasonable to believe that this confusion and impiety, as far as regards the interpretation of the decrees of God, in some measure arises from the unsettled state of the doctrine in the opinions of the ministry.

With a view of ascertaining some of the chief points in debate, the writer of the present treatise has gone as deeply and as fully into the matter as the case appears to him to require; and if he has

not set the whole subject in a clearer light than he has as yet seen it in any previous publication, he can truly affirm that it is not for the want of giving it his earnest and laborious attention.

He somewhat regrets that the conciseness which he thought it prudent to prescribe to himself has not allowed him to attempt to throw round his work any of those charms of ornament, so captivating to modern tastes, to the exclusion too often it is to be feared of the most solid and essential truths. He hopes, however, that an aim at a strict adherence to the real signification of God's word, on one of the most important of all religious subjects, will supersede, with the thinking and reasonable reader, the necessity of all other attractions.

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1817. *Scots*

The following Index may be bound with the *Refutation of Nonconformity*—to which it belongs.

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SCRIPTURE AND CALVINISM,

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CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

THERE are few things besides acrimonious language which a controvertist on a religious topic is more bound to avoid than indiscriminate charges on particular classes and denominations of the professors of the Christian faith. It is hardly possible, such is the diversity of opinion in the same sects and divisions, to make a general promiscuous accusation of a whole body without giving occasion to some of its members to complain of injustice, and to convict the accuser of that from which a disputant ought, of all persons, to be exempt—inaccuracy. Indeed I know scarcely any more probable means than these comprehensive condemnations of exciting the prejudices, and inflaming the passions of the reader, if he happens to fall under the appellation of the party which is

so promiscuously reprov'd, and of defeating the only good objects of controversial writing, the composure of differences, and the propagation of truth. I shall therefore endeavour to controvert some doctrines and expound others, carefully abstaining to ascribe to a class the opinions of any individual, or to an individual any opinion which he has not literally avowed.

In adopting this method of procedure, I shall indeed frequently, and as far as I can conveniently, confine my observations to doctrines abstractedly from the consideration of persons by whom they are maintained. None however of those members of the Christian profession, who deserve in any degree the peculiar name of Calvinists, will find themselves unconcerned in the subjects which I have undertaken to discuss, because my inquiries have led me to dissent from much of their system of theology in its most moderate character.

It will be, in great measure, the object of the following pages to prove, to the satisfaction of the reader, that it is contrary to the truth that it has been the decree of the Almighty, without regard to any internal or external circumstances of their spiritual condition, to select a portion of those souls to whom the Gospel is preached, for a certainty of everlasting salvation, which they cannot possibly fail to attain, and to pass by the rest in the same

irrespective manner as destined to an equal certainty of eternal damnation ⁽¹⁾. If I can possibly establish the truth of this position, in such a manner as cannot be refuted by persons of a contrary opinion, it is evident that it will not be necessary to attempt to shew further the more flagrant errors of a similar nature. It will be perfectly unnecessary, for instance, to demonstrate what must then appear to be the horrible blasphemy of those doctrines which represent God as creating a part of mankind for the express purpose of consigning them to the flames of hell, and with a view to the display of his glory ⁽²⁾; and that the section of the rational creation thus intended by their maker for perdition constitute the great majority of human beings ⁽³⁾. It is to the denial of the more moderate views of the divine decrees to which I shall direct my attention. I shall proceed regularly to the consideration of the doctrines of election, final perseverance, grace and freewill, reprobation and predestination; and shall, in the course of the work, endeavour to state the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Church on all these controverted points. I shall devote the earlier part of the volume to the demonstration of the fact, that it is repugnant both to Scripture and reason, that God has irrespectively decreed to elect a favoured portion of the hearers of the gospel to a

certainty of everlasting salvation, that is, without the possibility of their losing their souls during their natural lives; and that he has similarly passed by or reprobated others who were neither more nor less unworthy of his election, and left them to inevitable destruction. But previously to commencing this demonstration, I deem it expedient to show that reason may be, to a great extent, separately employed for the purpose of deciding this question. The proof of this applicability of reason will be contained in the next chapter. If any reader is convinced of it already he may pass on at once to chapter iii.

CHAPTER II.

INFERENCES OF REASON ALLOWABLE IN OUR
INQUIRIES INTO THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

I STATED, in a former work, my conviction of the great utility of reason in interpreting the Scripture, and in forming our opinions of the dealings of God with mankind; and I so carefully guarded myself at the same time against unjust imputations of the abuse of reason in such speculations, that I shall not now think it necessary to take the same precaution (¹). I indeed might then have set a much higher value on our rational faculties, under the limitation with which I accompanied my opinion. I am, in short, such an advocate for the use of reason in learning the Scriptures, and in investigating the will of God, that I think it highly *reasonable* to believe all that is required of us as articles of faith in Scripture. But I wish not now to embrace so wide a proposition. I shall confine myself strictly to the proof of the assertion that we are authorised by the divine word to deduce in a general manner, by the employment of our reason upon certain fundamental facts and truths, the modes of treatment, in one or more of their principles, which it may please

the Almighty to pursue towards his rational creation.

Authorities of this kind are numerous. A very beautiful and affecting instance occurs in the allusions of our Saviour to the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air, when he wished to prevail upon his disciples not to be over-thoughtful and careful about the things of this world. One can hardly refrain from producing the whole passage (Matt. vi.) Its beauties are so striking, and the doctrine which it conveys is so gracious and so comfortable, that it is scarcely possible it can be heard too frequently. It is one of those many fragments of the bread of life which can never fail to gratify the appetite of those who hunger after righteousness. Still, for the sake of brevity, I will content myself with noticing all that is most to my present purpose. "If God (says Christ) so feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies of the field, are you not much better than they, and shall he not much more clothe you (if you do your duty to him more particularly), O ye of little faith?" Here our Saviour brings to the recollection of his disciples facts of common occurrence and observation, that the benevolent father of the universe provides for the wants of the feathered tribes, and supports in all their vigour the most beautiful of his vegetable productions. He then appeals to their knowledge

of revelation to work the conviction on their minds that they are themselves far superior to these creatures in their capabilities and destiny; and, lastly, founds an argument on this very superiority, that God will make men much preferably the objects of his providential care. Now the whole series of these remarks is addressed to our reason and experience. The conclusion that God will *much more* clothe the human race is indeed made by a direct appeal to reason, as if reason itself might have been sufficient for its formation—as if Christ had said, shall he not *therefore* much more clothe you? And what is farther to be noted, the entire discourse, argumentative as it is, was delivered in explanation of one of God's dealings towards men.

There is another passage much to our purpose in the following chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel (vii.), and even still more edifying, more encouraging and consolatory, inasmuch as it refers more particularly to the preparation for eternity. "Ask, says Christ, and it shall be given you: for every one that asketh, receiveth." One might have supposed, with propriety, that whatever our Saviour meant by this declaration, that his assurance ought to have been sufficient to convince any man that what he promised would be performed. But instead of leaving men to believe it only on his bare assertion, he

literally vouchsafes to have recourse to a confirmation of his word, and by an argument derived from observation on common life. "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things, or the holy spirit to them that ask him?" Very little explanation need be given of a passage so intelligible. But, it may be observed, all men, and especially the faithful, are the children of God; and our Saviour wished to persuade, at least the faithful, that if they prayed to God for what they ought to ask, and in the manner prescribed, that God would grant their petitions. This he did by inquiring whether it were probable, generally speaking, that a father, according to the flesh, would mock the craving appetite of his children by offering them stones instead of bread; or serpents as a substitute for another common article of food? To this inquiry he reasonably expected an answer in the negative; and yet the father, as being a man, is evil—is naturally corrupt. Hence argues our Saviour, if an earthly parent, infected with moral depravity, will satisfy, if possible, the hunger of the child, is it not extremely credible that our heavenly

father, who is perfectly good, is much more likely to afford to the faithful as *his* children such blessings as they need, should they supplicate him in a fit and becoming manner. I adduce this instance of an argumentative mode of instruction occasionally followed by our Lord, not as an evidence merely of the use of reason, but for its tendency to authorise us to employ our reason upon certain received principles, and in illustration or development of the divine dispensations.

A third example of the same kind of reasoning presents itself in Rom. v. 10—one more cheering and supporting indeed can with difficulty be found in the entire compass of revelation—and that bearing on the manner in which God regards and treats the faithful Christian. “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly; for scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For (and this it is which I mean to be particularly observed), *for* if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” Similar to this passage is that text of

St. Paul: "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). In this and the preceding quotation our reason is exercised, not on the phænomena of nature as in the other examples, but on a doctrine of revelation, and for the purpose already specified.

But in every instance which I have hitherto given, the argument has been directed to the proof of the *benevolence* and *mercy* of the Deity; in those cases which follow, it will be seen that the same exercise of reason is intended to elucidate the divine *justice*.

The most remarkable example of this kind is probably that contained in Ezek. xviii. It is unnecessary here to detail at great length all the principal particulars of that chapter, or to reconcile the two declarations of the divine will of at one time visiting the sins of the fathers on the children, and at another, as in this chapter, of making every man bear his own burden. Suffice it to observe, that certain of the people of the Jews were guilty of the monstrous audacity of charging God with acts of injustice towards them; that upon this God actually condescends to offer a vindication of his principle of action; that God describes this principle substantially as follows:—If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath

not done any such wickedness as is mentioned in the chapter in question, he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God. “If he beget a son that is wicked in certain ways which are specified, he shall surely die—his blood shall be upon him; and if he beget a son that seeth all his father’s sins which he hath done, and doeth not such like, and hath executed my judgments and walked in my statutes, he shall not die for the iniquity of the father, he shall surely live; as for his father he shall die in *his* iniquity. Yet say ye why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?” God answers them further thus:—“When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and

committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."

Now, without entering at all into the cause of the popular complaint, or the grounds of the error into which the nation had fallen, I think we must be forcibly struck with the reasonableness and justice of the manner in which God dealt with his people, judging from the luminous explanation which is here presented to our view. It appears to agree with our ideas of what is right and just—the best notions that we can form of right and justice by the use of our reasoning powers. But it is farther to be observed, that God actually does appeal to human judgment in this matter. As soon as the account just recited was delivered, the Almighty says to the people by his prophet:—"Yet ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear, now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?" And so intent is God on establishing the justice of his own proceedings in the minds of his people, that after a brief recapitulation of the same explanatory statement, he repeats the question in much the same form of expression. Here then is an instance in which God is pleased

to contend for the justice of his dealings, and to refer the arbitration of the case to the decision of the judgment of mankind. And till we can discover a single exertion of the supreme power of the almighty ruler of the universe which is palpably unjust towards man, and which he vindicates as a violation of the strictest justice of which we can form a conception, we are compelled, in duty to God, to conclude that whatever human reason can prove to be iniquitous, cannot be one of his acts, and that the more evident the iniquity of any dispensation appears to human reason, the more incredible it is, that it should emanate from his authority. And certainly we shall never be able to make a discovery to warrant conclusions of an opposite nature.

Abraham's intercession with God about the destruction of Sodom, affords another example of the use of reason in judging of the divine dispensations. It appeared to Abraham, in the exercise of his judgment, that it would be unjust to destroy the righteous inhabitants of Sodom together with their abandoned fellow-citizens. He thinks that God will not do this, because of the apparent injustice that the righteous should be as the wicked. And in his assurance that God will deal justly with the people, he asks this question of him to whom he had taken upon himself to speak:—"Shall

not the judge of all the earth do right ?” Now it does not appear that God condemned Abraham for all this advocacy of the people of Sodom. On the contrary, God grants him every request, which in the desire that the righteous should be spared his venturous importunity preferred. He first implores God to spare the city if there were fifty righteous within it. This entreaty is accepted. He then successively solicits the same mercy for the sake of forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and ten. These requests are all conceded. It appears that God approved the idea of Abraham, that it would not be right to destroy the righteous of the city in punishing its abominations ; that God designed not to include the righteous and the wicked in one indiscriminate ruin. Neither is it reasonable to imagine that a single righteous inhabitant of the city did perish in the avenging conflagration. Four righteous persons, Lot, his wife, and two daughters were, we know, commanded by God to escape before the arm of his vengeance was displayed. There could not possibly be more than five innocent victims of the divine wrath. Yet how can it be imagined, with any show of reason, that it was agreeable to the divine will that even one man should be undeservedly punished in the overthrow of Sodom, when God was so disposed to admit the validity of Abraham’s intercession for the

righteous; for injustice in the case of ten is injustice still on a smaller scale. Unrevealed, and so far doubtful, as is the moral condition of at least five of the citizens of that execrable place, the human ideas of justice expressed by Abraham are approved and allowed by God in his dealings with his creatures.

I certainly do not recollect any passages in the New Testament in which we are specially commanded to judge of the justice of God's dealings with mankind. It is, however, perfectly impossible to adduce an instance of divine dispensation which reason can pronounce to be evidently unjust; and it is no less certain, that in many cases, the acts of providence are represented to us as in strict accordance with our own ideas of right. We are, for example, several times instructed that we shall be judged according to our works (Matt. xvi. 27; Rom, ii. 6; &c., &c.) This appears to be perfectly free from injustice. We are in another place (Luke xii. 47, 48) informed that the servant who knew his Lord's will, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes; and that the servant which knew not his Lord's will, and still did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. This again appears to be perfectly just and reasonable. So, thirdly, it is revealed that unto whomsoever much is given of

him shall much be required ; and, by a necessary inference, unto whomsoever little is given, of him shall little be required. Evidences of, so to speak, a similar propriety are discoverable in, among other places, Acts xvii. 30, 1 Tim. i. 13.

If, then, there is no instance to be found of God's dealings with mankind which, reasoning on the circumstances of the case decides to be one of injustice ; and if, on the contrary, there are such cases of which the justice is evident on a rational view of them, and some which are referred to our reason for approval, without any which reason in any way condemns ; there is ground, without contradiction, for our assertion that the sound inferences of reason are admissible in our religious views of the divine dispensations.

I do not at this moment assert that any of the doctrines of Calvinism are such that they indirectly charge God with injustice. All I affirm at present is, that if any of those doctrines do imply, according to reason, injustice on the part of his providence, that we may be assured that the doctrines are untrue.

CHAPTER III.

THE INJUSTICE OF THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINES
OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION ACCORDING
TO REASON.

IN treating this part of my subject I make no difference between preterition and reprobation. It is absurd to imagine that God passes by any number of persons as not being designed for salvation, without the intention of condemning them to perdition. If it be true that God selects a few, or even a majority of the human race, as objects of his special favour, and leaves the rest to the unavoidable torment of eternal fire, it is impossible to deny that this abandonment is the same at least in effect as ordaining them expressly, or even creating them purposely, for that most awful of all destinies ; and it must be for others to ascertain, if they possibly can, the difference between the acts signified by the two terms alluded to (¹). I shall also, agreeably to a preceding intimation, omit as a question equally immaterial to this branch of my argument, the consideration whether the number of the elected, in the Calvinistic sense of that term, be small or great. Calvin and his

followers contend, as we have already seen, for the paucity of the saved (²). The words of our Saviour, in addressing his *twelve* Apostles, “fear not *little flock*,” is one of those misapplied, but favourite, arguments by which they maintain their opinion. But to my case it makes no difference whether few or many be elected. It would certainly be more comfortable to the human race in general, to believe that the greater number would be heirs of salvation; but if it be really unjust that any should be elected agreeably to the Calvinistic doctrine, the impossibility of such election will be established for any number of persons, however great or small. I shall, therefore, avail myself of this opportunity, among others, of abridging a subject which, at the shortest, cannot but make large demands on the reader’s attention.

The first objection that I take to the doctrine which teaches the irrespective election of a portion of mankind to an infallible certainty of everlasting life, while the remainder are irrespectively remanded to eternal damnation, is, according to reason, its evident injustice.

The injustice appears, on a rational view of the matter, in two ways. But before I make good my assertion, I would observe, that, according to the Calvinistic view of the matter, all men are in exactly the same predicament as to unworthiness

of election as to corruption and damnation. I cannot assert that this is an express doctrine of Calvinism. There are, to my knowledge at least, certain parts of the system that present very much that appearance. For instance, the disciples of Calvin maintain that every man before his election is wholly corrupt, without the least degree or the lowest kind of goodness in his nature. Mr. Scott insists strongly, after converting what is figurative into literal on a certain passage in the second volume of the Homilies, that man is of his own nature fleshly, without one spark of goodness in him, p. 15, and on another in the IX. Article of the Church, that every man is as far gone as possible from original righteousness, pp. 44, 45 (³). Now, let these last words be taken in their full and literal signification, and the fact is asserted at once that every man is as perfectly depraved as possible by nature. Therefore, there cannot be the slightest difference naturally between any men in moral turpitude; and nature appears to be the whole scope in this case of our opponent's contemplation. But perhaps it is possible the learned Calvinist does not intend to carry his doctrine to its extremes by denying that all those whom he denominates the unregenerate are totally depraved. He may mean only that men are all equally destitute of what is good—not that they are all equally

defiled with evil. Mr. Scott has, in fact, asserted, in plain and positive terms, that such is his opinion with respect to goodness. "We do indeed maintain that every good affection towards God was extinguished by the fall." (*Remarks*, p. 37.) And if we suppose only that all men are destitute of goodness, there may be many differences between such men in the degrees of corruption. Thus we could not strictly affirm, according to the Calvinistic theory, on such authority as that just cited, that Calvinists hold that all men were exactly on an equality in point of unworthiness. Still I think it is a doctrine to which they must in effect confess themselves obliged to subscribe as a consequence of their declared tenets and sentiments. It is true that Calvin has written in one place that all men are not born in the same condition; but he does not signify by that expression that there is any difference in human nature, only that some men are born to damnation and others to eternal life (⁴). Indeed the Calvinists always speak as if there were no difference in men as to their unworthiness of salvation. I say this, not merely because they deny, properly enough, that there is any merit in man; for this doctrine, however true, would not, as we have just observed, preclude the possibility of some men's being less undeserving than others. But they do not make this concession, that I am

aware of, that one man has less demerit than another. They do not allow, at all events, that any difference in men's demerits is a ground for election or reprobation ⁽⁵⁾. They refer both solely to the will of God without any regard whatever to any difference in men's characters ⁽⁶⁾. And as they determine that the choice or rejection of men is entirely independent of their characters in the sight of God, we may justly assume, in conducting this part of our inquiry, that there is to all intents and purposes no difference between them. It comes to the same thing as if there were no difference, when any difference, if there is any, is left by the divine dispenser of grace entirely out of his consideration.

Now, if all men are alike exactly with respect to demerit, it certainly does, in the eye of reason, appear evidently unjust that there should be any such difference made towards them in the exercise of beneficence, that some only should be chosen to a certainty of salvation and others condemned to inevitable perdition. It is not an answer to this objection to say with Mr. Scott, that if all men are undeserving, it is no injustice for any not to receive favour to which they are not entitled, and that a supreme power may dispense his favours to whom he will (*Remarks*, pp. 208, &c.) Nor is it a solution of the difficulty to deny, as the same

writer has done, that there is any unjust partiality in such a mode of dispensation. Mr. Scott's denial of unjust partiality goes in its proof to the dispensation only of mercy. He illustrates or explains his meaning merely by the bestowal of a penny on every labourer in the vineyard (*Remarks*, pp. 207, 208). A very uncertain source of argument in this respect is the parabolical passage to which he refers; but, admitting for a moment, what we are not at all obliged to concede, but rather able to deny, that the rewards of heaven are all equal, it proves nothing in our question. For there is nothing absolutely unjust, according to the best of our judgment, in bestowing the same reward on persons who obeyed similarly to these vine-dressers. Reason does not contemplate injustice in the equal distribution of infinitely unmerited rewards. But this is to consider only one side of the matter in dispute. When I speak of unjust partiality, I do not separate the distribution of everlasting rewards from the sentence to everlasting punishments. It is in the infliction of punishments, considered conjointly with the concession of mercy, that reason detects the unjust partiality. It has a reference rather to the punishments than the rewards; or, more accurately speaking, to the two in conjunction. It is in the view of these final and eternal retributions taken

together, that the Calvinistic theory is liable in all reason to the charge of partiality. If those men who are doomed to certain unavoidable damnation are equally as much entitled to mercy as the others who are chosen infallibly to life eternal, and the elect are exactly as deserving of damnation as the reprobate; if, in short, both the lost and the saved are in precisely the same state with respect to worthiness or unworthiness, then there is *in reason* no cause why a preference should be given to one over the other. There is not, according to reason, a fairness, an equality of dealing, but rather an infinite inequality and unfairness in selecting some for happiness and others for misery, to endure through all eternity. And what is this but injustice? How could the ways of God in such a case, according to reason, be equal? (Ezekiel xviii. 25, &c. &c.) I confine my observations to what reason dictates. I affirm not that God would not deal with men in these ways. I say only that it is reasonable to think that he would not. And I venture to deny the possibility of proving that it is unreasonable to hold such an opinion, on our supposition that there is a perfect coincidence and equality in the conditions of the parties previously to that sentence of the judge which affords to one no opportunity of salvation, and decrees an unavoidable eternity of happiness to the other.

The second mode in which the Calvinistic theory of election and reprobation appears to involve the Deity in injustice, agreeably to reason, is as follows:—It is frequently and plainly taught in scripture, that every man is to be judged at the tribunal of Christ according to his works; and that they who have done good shall go into life eternal, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. Now, in the Calvinistic view of the divine decrees, it was perfectly impossible for those who will be condemned at the day of judgment for their disobedience to have done any thing else but disobey. They were born into the world expressly for the purpose of damnation; were designed from all eternity for that miserable condition, and were left in their total corruption to work wickedness only, without the least power being conferred upon them of doing the smallest good. *Reason* revolts at this statement. She declares that it is unjust to punish any man for what he could not possibly help committing, and infinitely unjust to punish with endless pain of the most excruciating kind the sins which were utterly unavoidable.

The Calvinist however denies, and endeavours to disprove, the validity of this reasoning. His objections we will now briefly consider.

Our conclusion is sometimes attempted to be set

aside, by some distinction between natural and moral inability (7), by which it would almost appear that man has that power over his own actions which in other parts of the system is strenuously denied. But this distinction must be, in a high degree, imaginary and vain. For if it be true, as the Calvinists maintain, that man has by nature no will whatever to do any thing which is good, and that God does not impart any good will to those whom he predestines to damnation, the moral inability of those persons must be just as effectual an impediment to their godliness of life as the natural inability to fly is to the performance of an aerial excursion similarly to the winged creatures (8).

But the most direct answer to our conclusion as to the injustice of punishing for those sins which man never had from his cradle to the grave the least power to avoid, appears to be that the reasoning would be just, if God made man as he now is. This reply was given by the author of the *Remarks on Bishop Tomline's Refutation* in a case so extremely similar, that I think I am justified in applying it in the present instance.

It certainly is the strongest objection, weak as it is, to our view of the injustice of punishment for utterly unavoidable transgressions; and I will,

therefore, bestow upon it all the consideration which it appears to deserve.

The author of the *Remarks* seems then to be of opinion, that it is not by the power and will of the Almighty that man is born into the world, and continued in life without the least spark of goodness whatever in him, but by his own act and deed, and that in consequence he may be justly punished for his offences committed by necessity (⁹). This does appear to me one of the most untenable assertions that I have noticed in his whole theory. If there be any intelligible meaning in the premises of Mr. Scott's argument, I presume it is this—a mere statement of which I think must carry its own refutation to every intelligent mind—that the birth of every man in a state of natural corruption is the work of that particular person himself. I have always been accustomed to consider that the birth of a child is an act of nature; or, more properly speaking, of the Deity operating by natural causes; and that his moral inability and corruption, whatever they may be, are visitations of divine judgment, in consequence of the fall of our first parents; that it was God's will that every man should enter this world under such circumstances, and certainly not the will and the act of every individual. And the great master of Calvinism

seems, I think, to have been of the same opinion.

If, therefore, we may assume that no individual does make himself, and bring himself into the world a mass of corruption, but that God has caused every human being born of woman to enter this state of existence in that condition, and to continue in the same condition till he give him power to assert his liberty from the dominion of evil passion, it will immediately follow, that those to whom God refuses by eternal predestination to grant the least assistance of his grace, must inevitably sin if they arrive at years of understanding. And we come to the position with which we started, that reason pronounces it to be unjust to punish a man for evil works which he could not help performing, and which he did not bring upon himself the inability to perform, that inability being the infliction of the Almighty.

It must be carefully observed, however, that reason denounces as inconsistent with itself only the absolute visitation of eternal penalties on the posterity of our first progenitor, and is not opposed to every modification of their temporal and probationary punishment. It is impossible to pronounce, by the mere exercise of our reason, that there is the slightest injustice in the divine dispensation of

corrupting the human nature. How far indeed the sin of the common parent of all mankind may have been visited in its effects on all his descendants, is a question which is known to have much agitated theological inquiry, and will never be fully understood while we see but in part. Its extent is not, I conceive, such as may be often imagined. It has been well observed, in the first place, that the great master of the Calvinistic school very probably did not maintain the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to the entire human family (Laurence's *Bamp. Lect.* 69. 8); and that our Church has very cautiously and wisely abstained from declaring that the corruption of the flesh by nature has incurred eternal damnation (Laurence. *Ibid* 66 and 68. 7). And even if original or birth sin were actually in itself subject to everlasting punishment, it is probable that the lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world, is its all-sufficient atonement and propitiation. The only feature in the case that can at all appear to conflict with justice, is that evil passion and concupiscence which renders obedience to the law of God and the salvation of the soul difficult and uncertain. It is hardly possible not to regard this depravity, or rather depravation, of nature, not only as a mark of divine displeasure, but as a punishment and disadvantage; for there can be no doubt that if we

were in all other respects the same, the removal of this burden of fleshly passions would immensely facilitate the influence of grace. Still we have so little knowledge of all the natural and gracious circumstances in which both Adam and ourselves are placed, that it is utterly impracticable for reason itself to decide that the affliction of the children of Adam with carnal depravity is any act of injustice on the part of the ruler of the world. There may be compensating circumstances which do not render our condition at all more unfavourable to salvation than that of Adam before the fall, notwithstanding that one element in our case is a great excess of carnality. It is, I believe, very common to assign to Adam much perfection of nature, on account of the superlative measure of goodness which is ascribed to all the works of the creation in the last verse of the opening chapter of the bible. But without attempting to ascertain the true import of that passage, it is evident to a moment's reflection, that the interpreter of it may very easily carry the imputation of transcendent excellence to our created parent far beyond the limits of reality and truth. For it is perfectly certain, that Adam's primitive nature was not such as to prevent him, and the sole partaker of it besides himself, from the direct violation of the only commandment of God, which we find enjoined

upon them, at almost, as far as we can understand, the earliest opportunity for the commission of the sin; and to preclude them from the consequent loss of life and salvation, the greatest penalties that can now be incurred by their more corrupt successors in trial and mortality. And till it can be shown that with a more corrupted nature, but under another state of grace, we are in worse condition than Adam originally, with his liability to fall, we have no reason for thinking that our case of probation is more unjust than his. So that as far as the mere corruption of nature is concerned, the question may come to this issue, that we may believe that God may justly place Adam and his posterity in different probationary conditions and circumstances. At all events this is a conclusion very unlike the absolute damnation of men to all eternity, either for the sins of Adam, or for sins which they must unavoidably commit as his children. This is a case, as I trust I have previously shown, palpably unjust in the judgment of our reason. But, God be praised, we do not depend on reason only. It is a doctrine above what is written; and, as I hope to be able to show, contrary to it—a blasphemy against God, and a heavy burden grievous to be borne even in this transitory state. If there be one subject in religion more delightful than another, it is that which

relates, in whatever way, to the goodness and love of God towards us his unworthy creatures; and which banishes from our minds all those ideas of him that constitute the image of a deity, whose creative power was exercised for the pleasure of destroying and making miserable; it is that attribute of love and mercy in which it is, as he signified to Moses, his glory to be seen. And if there is one point of view in which it is more comfortable than most others to contemplate the God of Heaven, it is as the father who runs out to meet his returning prodigal, when he can discern in him even the most distant disposition to reform it is as the being who has condescended to represent himself and the angelic host, as rejoicing in the accession of one repentant sinner to the sharers of his grace, and as mourning over the perverseness and obstinacy of impenitence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF ELECTION NOT
DISCOVERABLE IN SCRIPTURE FROM THOSE
PASSAGES WHICH REFER TO ELECTION IN
EXPRESS TERMS.

PART I.

*A general view of the first eight chapters of the
Epistle to the Romans, with a few preliminary
Remarks.*

IN endeavouring to establish the truth of our position, I shall commence my inquiry with that very remarkable portion of Scripture which certainly appears to the unlearned to be directly opposed to it, and to be quite sufficient of itself to authorise the contrary assertion, I mean the celebrated passage in the 9th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and as I would gladly include in my proof all the observations that can be absolutely necessary for the general reader, I must, in consequence, enter into a few particulars, and adopt a line of argument which will occupy parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the present chapter, and

which may be omitted in the perusal without injury to the subject of discussion, by any who have already ascertained that the passage in question affords no countenance to the peculiar views of Calvin, on the doctrine under examination.

My method of proving that the passage in Rom. ix. does not reveal the doctrine of Calvin with respect to election, will embrace a slight general examination of the contents of the epistle to the end of the eleventh chapter, and a more minute criticism of the passage itself.

First, as to the drift of that part of the epistle which precedes the passage in chap. ix.

In order to comprehend this division of our argument, it is necessary to take into consideration some important particulars relative to the partition of the world into Jews and Gentiles, which, however superfluously noticed to some of my readers, I venture to detail for the benefit of others possessed of less information. It is necessary to understand that the Jews and the Gentiles were, generally speaking, two distinct classes, which comprised the whole population of the globe. It is useful to know that the Jews were descended from Abraham, that God chose them for his peculiar people many hundreds of years before the birth of Christ; that God made them his Church on earth; that he became for a while their king;

that the bible, or the old testament, was in their hands only ; that the Jewish religion, particularly in the ceremonial part of it, was intended to prepare the people for the coming of Christ among them. It is farther deserving of notice, that, though the Jews were thus elected by God to be his Church and people, they were not all of them chosen to a certainty of salvation. It is, on the contrary, beyond question that they were not *all* saved eternally. Judas Iscariot is one exception. It is indeed to be feared, so rebellious and unfaithful were that infatuated nation, that great numbers of them perished; and our Saviour speaks of the people in general as being in a lost state (Matt. x. 6, xv. 24) at the time of his ministry, which he could not have done, had they all been elected in the Calvinistic sense of the term. It appears, indeed, that the people were chosen, principally for the enjoyment of certain means of becoming, if they employed them, the happiest nation under heaven. They had the knowledge of God communicated to them in an extraordinary manner. If they had been willing to take advantage of the blessings which they enjoyed, it would have been their happiness to have been so distinguished from all other people. But the blessings bestowed upon them they might abuse, or they might neglect: and they did both abuse and neglect them,

so that they appear even to have been in a worse situation than others who were not favoured with the same privileges (Matt. xi, 22). They were, in short, chosen to the best means of salvation, not to salvation itself; and what should have been to them for their wealth, was unto them an occasion of falling. But more than this. The ceremonial part of the religion of the Jews was to be abolished on the establishment of the Gospel of Christ. As it was intended principally to prepare for the advent of the Saviour of the world, when the Saviour came, the preparation was not any longer required, nor retained, as an article of the divine economy. Thus, all their sacrifices were to cease; and, among other ceremonies to be disused, may be particularly noted that of circumcision. In addition to these circumstances, it is proper to observe, that, in the beginning of the Christian era, the Jews were to be cast off because of their unbelief; they were to be no longer God's peculiar people, and the Gentiles were to be adopted in their stead. (See, amongst many other proofs of the adoption of the Gentiles, Isaiah xlii. 1, lx. 3, lxvi. 19, Mal. i. 11, Luke xxiv. 47, Acts xiii. 46, xviii. 6). Besides which, it is of importance to remark, that so elated were the Jews with the distinguished favours of the Almighty, that they could not conceive that their religion was to be superseded, and

entertained supreme contempt for all other nations. They could not believe, or endure, the election of the Gentiles in preference to themselves, nor the discontinuance of their ceremonial, and insisted upon the observance of it even by believers in Christ.

Proofs of the truth of these assertions occur frequently (see Acts x. 28, 44, 45). St. Peter himself did not understand that the Gentiles were admissible into the Church of Christ till he received the vision. And how the Jews regarded the apostle's preaching to the Gentiles, may be sufficiently perceived from a passage in a speech which St. Paul made to them on one occasion at Jerusalem, relative to his conversion. They had listened attentively to him for some time, till at last he came to a part of his address in which he found it necessary to mention that Christ had commanded him to go to the Gentiles. As soon as the people heard that obnoxious word, they broke out into the most outrageous violence (Acts xxii. 21, 22.) As to the Jews not believing the intended abolition of the ceremonies of their religion, see Acts, xv. 1, 24, Gal. v. 1—5. And further, one proof out of many is sufficient to establish the fact, that the Jews inculcated the necessity of the observance of the Mosaic ritual for salvation (Acts xv. 1). This was a doctrine which naturally created

great disturbance in the Christian Church, caused wide divisions, and perverted, in a most serious manner, the faith in Christ. Knowing, as we do, that the Jewish religion was to be abolished on the establishment of Christianity, and that the ceremonial law was only a schoolmaster to bring the people unto Christ: and knowing how spiritual and free from ceremonies our own religion is, and how entirely we are saved through faith, we can readily comprehend that any doctrines which tended to detain the Jews in the profession of their old religion, to reduce converted Jews under its standard, or involve the heathen converts in the same system, must be errors grievous to the apostle, and injurious, not to say destructive, to the souls who entertained them. So mischievous were the consequences of adhering or returning to the law of Moses, that St. Paul does not hesitate to affirm, that Christ is become of no effect to those who sought to be saved by it (Gal. v. 4). It is these facts that such teachers existed, and laboured to seduce the people, to which frequent allusions are made in several of St. Paul's epistles. In none are they more alluded to than in the Epistle to the Romans.

It may excite surprise in the minds of some of my readers, that the agitation of Jewish questions should have so early reached a city about a thousand

miles distant from the scene of our Saviour's ministry. But the intercourse between Rome and Jerusalem is a fact that is well established. Even Jewish strangers from Rome were at Jerusalem on the great day of Pentecost. Of their return to their own city there is no reason to doubt, and many of them probably converted to the faith of their Redeemer. Traces of communication between the two countries of Italy and Palestine occur in other places of Scripture. Ecclesiastical writers supply evidence of a similar nature; nor is it at all to be wondered at, since Rome was the mistress of the then civilised world; and was, in fact, the seat of the government of the country of the Jews, which was only a province of the Roman empire, and since the synagogues of the Jews in various parts of the world corresponded with the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. It is not necessary to explain a circumstance that occasions no difficulty to persons at all acquainted with the history of the times. It is quite sufficient evidence of the disputes of Jew and Gentile concerning justification and salvation having engaged the attention of the Church of Rome, that much of the epistle which St. Paul wrote to that church, with the exception of moral injunctions more particularly towards the end, abounds in doctrines relative to Jews and Gentiles; and just such points as we might suppose

the apostle would discuss in contradiction to Jews who taught that the Gentiles could not be justified and saved except by the law of Moses; though they are certainly interwoven with a refutation of the idea of the heathen being justified by works in opposition to the Christian faith. It is very certain from the epistle itself, that St. Paul designed its contents for neither Jews nor Gentiles exclusively. There are several marks of this design in its pages. A very few may suffice to establish the point. Observe particularly the following passages:—"Thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law" (ii. 17). "What shall we say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" (iv. 1). "That I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (i. 13). "I speak to you Gentiles as the apostle of the Gentiles" (xi. 13). And it is equally certain that the apostle, after an exordium of about fifteen verses, begins in the first chapter to enforce the doctrine of justification by faith. He asserts this doctrine very strongly in verse 17, although the sense of that passage is not easily understood in the English version. And when he has given in the latter part of the first chapter a horrible detail of the wickedness of the heathens, and made in much of the second a more particular allusion to the transgressions of the Jews, and in an early section

of the third chapter (to verse 20) had roundly asserted that neither Jew nor Gentile was justified by the observance of the law either of Moses or of works, he returns, with continued emphasis, to the affirmation of the great point he was desirous of establishing—that of justification by faith. This he asserts, with peculiar force, in reference both to Jews and Gentiles, more particularly in verses 28, 29, and 30. And to impress this the more indelibly on the minds of his Jewish disciples, he devotes a division of chapter the fourth to the exposition of this important fact, that even Abraham, the great father and founder of their nation, was justified in that manner; most of the remainder of that chapter being intended to produce, in both his Jewish and Gentile readers and auditors, the conviction of the truth which we have already asserted it was necessary to inculcate—that the Gentiles were to be received into the Church of God, if they believed, as well as any believers among the Jews (vv. 9, 10, 11, 12, 16—18). After noticing, in the commencement of the fifth chapter, a few of the privileges of the believer, the inspired writer appears to proceed to reflections on the grace of God in redemption, which are intended to convey the idea that salvation through Jesus Christ was designed for men without distinction of nation. And, in chap. vi. vii., he seems to have particularly

in view a slanderous report which he answers, of his teaching faith to the prejudice of obedience; and, in conclusion, probably of this branch of his subject, he then gives a very eloquent discourse, comprising chapter viii., on the blessings conferred upon the faithful in Christ Jesus, on their enjoyment of divine favour, their triumph over sin, and their anticipation of future happiness. This brings us to chapter ix.

PART II.

Some observations on Rom. ch. ix. with an examination of a portion of the celebrated passage contained in vv. 10—31.

THE beginning of chapter ix. is a very remarkable point in the contents of the epistle to the Romans. It evidently indicates a new division of the apostle's subject. He turns his attention again to the condition of the Jewish nation. He teaches his disciples that the Jews were rejected from being God's people; and expresses, in a most impassioned manner, his regret at the circumstance. He, at the same time, immediately takes the opportunity of affirming that the word of

God has not been ineffectual and unfulfilled by this rejection of the Jews. Whether it was that he wished to obviate a presumption on the part of the Jews that they could not be rejected, because their rejection would impeach the veracity of God, it is evident that the apostle affirms that this vicissitude in their state was no violation of the divine promise. And the first reason which he assigns in substantiation of his assertion is, "that they are not all Israel which are of Israel."

These words of the apostle claim especial notice, as the author of the *Remarks* appears to consider them significant of the election to eternal life, which accords with the Calvinistic theory. He understands by them that there was "an Israel within Israel, one elected to outward advantages, another elected to eternal life," by which interpretation he seems to intend that a portion of the descendants of Israel were elected by God, not merely for the reception of doctrines calculated to prepare the recipients for eternal life, but to an infallible certainty of salvation. I think I am warranted in affixing this sense on the foregoing interpretation, as well by several other considerations, as, more particularly, the writer's belief in final perseverance. Now whether I have put a right construction or not on this author's words in this

place, I deem it advisable, before I proceed to the most noted part of the chapter, to make a few brief observations.

I. I observe, first, that to that opinion of the reverend writer, that there was an Israel within Israel, I have no abstract objection. My views of scripture on the points in controversy are very far indeed from throwing any impediments in the way of concession that there is a particular election of believers among a chosen people; on the contrary, they rather dispose me to advocate and maintain such an opinion. I believe that election in scripture does not always signify either that of entire nations as admissible to the benefits of the Gospel, or of particular persons for official appointments, but sometimes of bodies or individuals who *receive* the word of God in contradistinction from those to whom it is unknown, or by whom it is rejected; or, rather, of all the members of the Church of Christ. Facts and doctrines in substantiation of these opinions are, in my judgment, discernible in various parts of the sacred writings. Strong as my objections are to the interpretation of the words of the apostle by the Calvinistic commentator, that there was absolutely *not* an Israel within Israel I have by no means any intention to affirm.

II. I observe, secondly, that the words “for they are not all Israel which are of Israel,”

certainly do not *prove* the truth of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. Assuming that the doctrine is true, and even that the words which we have cited were intended by the apostle to refer to that doctrine, it is impossible to contend with any show of reason, that those words by themselves *evidence*, much less *establish*, the facts, that God elects a portion of a nation to a certainty of everlasting life; and that this election is made irrespectively of all the circumstances of the objects of his choice. And as the doctrine cannot be *proved* from this passage, I observe,—

III. Thirdly, that if it can be demonstrated on scriptural grounds, the proof must be derived from other parts of the holy volume; against the possibility of which the main force of the arguments of the present chapter will be directed. But,—

IV. Fourthly, I would remark, that *if* the Calvinistic doctrine were true, I think it is highly credible that the apostle's words do not so much as refer to it (¹). It is scarcely necessary to add that they cannot countenance it, if it be false.

The consideration of these words, “they are not all Israel which are of Israel,” introduces very aptly that passage of the ninth chapter, which the more superficial readers of their bible are prone to regard as essentially Calvinistic. They are words connected in some manner with the arguments

contained in that passage ; and it is through the medium of an assumed connexion only that the Calvinistic author under review has impressed the passage into the service of his creed.

It may be briefly stated that the learned are, I believe, agreed that the discourse of the apostle, contained in the tenth and twenty-one following verses of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, does not expressly declare the election of individuals to eternal life, but only to privileges of a temporal nature in point of duration. The esteemed advocate of Calvinism, whose opinions I feel myself obliged on some points to controvert, was indeed too well read to contend for the literal maintenance of the doctrine of absolute election to everlasting salvation in the verses enumerated. Nevertheless he by no means concedes that the apostle does not contemplate such an election in that particular portion of his epistle. He regards the most disputed part of it as an *illustration* of the doctrine, which, as we have remarked, he assigned to verse the sixth, that there was an Israel within Israel, one elected to outward advantages, another elected to eternal life (*Remarks*, 544, 575). How evident it is that this verse does not expressly teach the Calvinistic election I have already observed ; yet almost the entire force of the argument for such election in this chapter lies,

according to our author, in this identical text. There, in his opinion, is the doctrine which the remainder of the chapter is intended only or principally to *illustrate*. I believe that as far as *illustration* is concerned, it extends to verses six and seven rather than think it is confined to the sixth alone. But, however this may be, we are not to look, according to that writer, for a proof of the Calvinistic doctrine under consideration in the subsequent section of the apostolical epistle (*Remarks*, p. 544). (2)

But as the opinion of the author of the *Remarks* will probably not be satisfactory to many professors of Calvinism, it will be necessary to inquire into the evidence of the doctrine contained in this passage. And, at all events, if the entire passage by itself does not reveal the doctrine of absolute election, and the text in verses six and seven equally fails in establishing it, it will unquestionably follow that it is deducible from neither one place nor the other.

I proceed, for the reason just assigned, immediately to the examination proposed at the head of this part of the present chapter; and, afterwards in continuation, to that of the remainder of the controverted passage.

The end of the eighth verse presents us with a very suitable observation for the commencement of

our investigation. The apostle there, in support of his assertion that the word of God had not been ineffectual, defines the children of God as the children only of the promise; upon which he appears to signify that God limits and extends the favours of which he is discoursing to whom he pleases, and that we are to ascribe to his promises such a fulfilment alone as he designed. He begins by an allusion to Isaac as Abraham's promised child, to whom the election of God was restricted in that generation, and then proceeds to consider at length the case of Jacob. He enlarges upon this topic in such a manner as to show that God chose him in preference to Esau, without any regard to their lives, but purely from his own will and pleasure, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works but of him that calleth." But now come the questions for what purpose was Jacob chosen in preference to Esau? Was it eternal happiness, for which the one was inevitably destined and from which the other was infallibly debarred? Are the election and rejection made with respect to those two persons *individually*, and for the two opposite fates which have just been mentioned? If these are the objects expressed by St. Paul, or even appear to be the divine purposes from other

parts of scripture, then, of course, the decrees of God respecting Jacob and Esau, before they had done either good or evil, and that the election might not be of works, must be such as would give the most rigid Calvinist his whole heart's desire. Perfectly satisfactory must it have been to the Calvinist, had God revealed to us, by St. Paul, that the preference of Jacob to Esau was to the one a certain assurance of exaltation to heaven, and to the other of eternal misery. Is this the doctrine of the apostle in the passage we are considering? Has he made a broad and explicit statement of the fact? or has he used language which can fairly be presumed to convey even the slightest intimation of that being his intention? The maintainer of Calvinistic opinions is bound to produce from this place, considered as declaratory of his doctrine, some show of argument, some shadow of proof, *at least*, before he can appeal to it with any decorum in his justification. It is not unreasonable to require of him some substantial solid foundation for his creed from this much vaunted passage of St. Paul. What shall be said of his dependence on this passage for support, if it can be shown that it does not contain the smallest particle of evidence to his peculiar tenet? Yet this is absolutely the case. For what says the apostle as to the election of Jacob? Merely

in effect, as will be seen instantly when we come to scrutinize his expression merely *that the elder shall serve the younger*. Is this the mighty, the formidable sentence on which mankind are to found to any, much less to any great extent, the horrible doctrine that God chose and rejected Jacob and his brother, without any regard to their works, to unavoidable opposite and everlasting destinies, and that he predestined them to be created for these several ends from all eternity—and both of them for the manifestation of his glory? Does it bear in its outward appearance any mark whatever of such a signification? Does it admit of any such interpretation when probed and examined with the instruments of criticism? Let us see. We asked, for one question, whether the sentence “the elder shall serve the younger” referred to Esau and Jacob personally and individually? I unhesitatingly answer that it does not concern them in their own personal lives, but that it refers to the nations, to the people that descended from those two children as their natural offspring. In defence of this decision we have, I believe, in the first place no reason for thinking that Esau, the elder brother, did serve the younger, Jacob. It may be objected that the blessing of Esau by Isaac, contained in Gen. xxvii. 39, 40, is modified by a prediction literally to that effect. But this prophetic sentence

has been understood by learned men not in its literal acceptation, and considered to signify that the servitude was to be performed, not by Esau himself, but by his posterity. And I observe several very obvious and cogent reasons for this interpretation. The history of the lives of Jacob and Esau, as recorded in the book of Genesis, seems, in fact, to render it highly improbable, not to say impossible, that Esau should have rendered Jacob personal service. The little that we do know of the relative condition of the two brothers is rather of a reverse description. We know that the younger did obeisance in after-life to the elder. (See Gen. xxxii. xxxiii.) But, while we are destitute of grounds for believing from their biography that the elder individually served the younger in his own person, we are expressly informed that the descendants of Esau, the Edomites (Gen. xxxvi. 1), served as subjects and tributaries to the posterity of Jacob (1 Chron. xviii. 13). Add to this, that part of the benediction to which reference has been made, with its immediate context, is as follows :—“ And by thy sword *shalt thou live and shalt serve* thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when *thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck* (Gen. xxvii. 40). Now it is quite reasonable to assume, indeed it would be unreasonable to do otherwise, that, by

the person mentioned in the former member of the verse as decreed to serve his brother, is intended either the individual or the nation, precisely as the individual or the nation is signified, in the subsequent member, by him who was to have the dominion and to break the yoke. Here, again, we have no proof from the history of the *personal* fulfilment of the latter part of the prophecy, but are in possession of positive evidence that the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, did revolt from the posterity of Jacob and assert their independence (2 Kings, viii. 20). Thus, on the assumption which we have premised as rational, it is not the individual, but the nation, that is signified by him who was decreed to serve his brother, because it was the nation and not the individual that appears to have recovered their liberty from a state of subjugation. Farther confirmations of the same conclusion are derivable from Isaac's blessing of Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 29), more particularly when it is recollected that his "mother's sons" must, in all probability, be other than her immediate progeny, which appears to have consisted only of himself and his brother; and from Gen. xlix. 8, compared with verse 1, and the benedictions in the chapter generally; and these circumstances respecting Esau and Jacob, that Esau did not live in servitude to Jacob, but stood towards him in rather

a contrary position; and that the nation founded by Esau became subject to the Jews who descended from Jacob, and afterwards achieved their emancipation agreeably to the preceding prophecy, together with the corroborations which we have noticed, might be alone sufficient to satisfy the rational inquirer that the subjection of the Edomites to the tribe of Judah was the completion of that prophetic declaration that the elder should serve the younger. But if there could be the smallest room to doubt of the propriety of this interpretation, it is entirely removed by a reference to the passage in the book of Genesis, from whence the clause under review is extracted (Gen. xxv. 23). We there find it fully stated, "It was said to Rebecca *two nations* are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thee, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger." Thus one of our questions is solved. The words "the elder shall serve the younger" regard nations, not individuals.—Again, we ask, is the election (Rom. ix. 11, 12) to everlasting happiness? The answer to this question has been partly involved in our preceding remarks on the *nationality* of the sentence. The service which the elder brother, or elder people, was to perform towards the younger, was a temporal or political service. It

regarded the condition of the two nations in this world; and though that service might have, and probably had, some reference to their respective fates in a future state of existence; yet the decree of the service bears no express relation, contains no direct assertion, as to the eternal destiny of either nation. The whole that is expressed is the service of one nation to be rendered to the other, a certain superiority of one over the other, in which it was to receive submission and obedience. And this superiority was of a secular nature. It was to take place in the present life. To imagine that this passage in itself speaks of the world to come is pure invention, and it is only a separate, an independent examination of it that we are now undertaking. It may be observed, that the mention of the ages of the two brothers is a farther evidence that the service spoken of referred to this sublunary state. It appears that there is something remarkable in the elder serving the younger, rather than the younger serving the elder, that it is some reversal of the order of things by the absolute decree of the Almighty. Now it is not easy to imagine that there is any general ordinance of God that the elder branches of a family should take precedence of their juniors in their admissibility to heavenly happiness. We can assign no probable reason for such an appointment. We find no trace

of it in revelation. But while we can devise no rational account of the reference to the seniority of the rejected brother, as a proof of God's arbitrary decision, in things eternal, it becomes remarkably appropriate, when viewed in relation to earthly circumstances, because the first-born had, according to Jewish laws and customs, certain rights and privileges which were inconsistent with that sentence which it seemed good to God to pronounce in the case of the two children of Rebecca as referable to individuals.

But then it may be objected that it is also recorded that Almighty God loved Jacob and hated Esau (*v.* 13); but is this, I would ask, sufficient evidence for reasonable conviction that God designed one for eternal happiness and the other for everlasting misery; and does it follow immediately from its being written that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, that he must have loved the one and hated the other continually? Was it not possible that the love or the hatred, or both, might have lasted only for a time, or rather that they might not be intended to express some temporal visitations? Is it satisfactorily plain that they signified eternal love and eternal hatred? Is there the least symptom of this being the extent of their duration? And have we any right to affix such a meaning upon them arbitrarily, or are we under any obli-

gation to receive such an interpretation without a tittle of evidence? Prejudice of this kind is, at least, as unreasonable as that prejudice which would pronounce, without inquiry, that it must be a temporary love or a temporary hatred.

Now, in order to ascertain the true import of the text, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," it deserves first to be noticed, that it by no means follows that God absolutely hated Esau at all. It may mean, if we examine into the words themselves, only that God loved Jacob more than Esau. There are, at least, two proofs of this in Scripture. In Luke, xiv. 26, it is written, "If any man come to me and *hate* not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Now, we are morally certain that it cannot be signified in this place, by the word *hate*, that we are actually to comply with the condition expressed by our Lord to the letter, because the word of God teaches that we are not to hate any man, not even our enemies, and not to be void of natural affection. And elsewhere we find our Saviour explaining his intent in a way quite agreeable to the view we have now taken (Matt. x.37). He says, "he that loveth father and mother *more* than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy

of me." He does not say he that loves father or mother in any degree is not worthy of him ; and, on the whole, we cannot do otherwise than infer that he signified in Luke, xiv. 26, that a man must love his Lord at least more than he does his nearest and dearest relatives. There is another passage, if possible, plainer. In Gen. xxix. 30, we read that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. In the very next verse it is written, "when the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*."—But it is not merely by verbal criticism that we arrive at this conclusion. We have positive proof in God's dealing with Esau that he did not hold him in utterly unqualified aversion. This sufficiently appears from the blessing which Isaac gave him on his dying bed. He doubtless bestowed the chief benediction on Jacob ; but he reserved another for Esau, and one of no small value, considering that even Jacob's was only of a temporal nature. "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above ; and by thy sword shalt thou live and serve thy brother ; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40 comp. with Gen. xxvii. 28, 29). This perfectly accords with the interpretation we have proposed of the word *hate* as applied to Esau, that God loved Esau less than Jacob, giving

him in proof of it by the prophetic voice of Isaac, a less valuable blessing.

Now, lastly, it must be observed, that the hatred spoken of related, according to the revelation of scripture, beyond which, of course, we are neither able nor required to proceed, to the present state of existence. For, first, it is evident that St. Paul employs the words in question, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," in reference to the temporal condition of the Jews and the Edomites. He cites them, not only in allusion to the decree that the elder should serve the younger, but in support of that particular sentence. No sooner had he appealed to the annunciation made to Rebecca, the elder should serve the younger, than he immediately implies that it was made in conformity with the divine profession, "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated," in the manner following:—The elder shall serve the younger, *as* it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." We have just seen that the words "the elder shall serve the younger" are capable exclusively of a temporal application. It follows, therefore, that St. Paul, in introducing the revelation of the love of Jacob and the hatred of Esau, merely as conformable to this secular sense of the elder's service, has confined it, in this place, solely to a similar interpretation. And this is sufficient

for our purpose, as we are concerned at present only in ascertaining the purport of the words as they are used by the apostle in the passage before us. But we may advance one step further, and show, by reference to that book of the Old Testament from which the quotation is extracted, that it will not admit of any other construction. It is written, as St. Paul has said, in Mal. i. 2, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord, yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." That St. Paul referred to a portion of this sentence in his quotation Rom. ix. 13, is beyond all reasonable doubt; for though the words in our translations of the Old and New Testament are not exactly the same, yet St. Paul has himself employed (with a variation too trivial for objection)³ the identical terms which occur in that version of Malachi, from which it was the custom to quote in the time of Christ and the apostles; besides which the reference to the book of Malachi is the only one which can be made to any suitable original authority. But it is intuitively certain that the explanation, the interpretation of the words, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," in that place, is solely of a temporal description. Moreover, it will be recollected, that the blessings, which Isaac bestowed at his death on Jacob and Esau, were in

exclusive relation to this world, and that they contain the groundwork of all God's dispensations towards them.

We have now examined those verses of Rom. ix. which describe most particularly the case of Jacob and Esau; and it deserves to be noted, that it appears, on a variety of accounts, that the dispensations of God towards those patriarchs, as they are recorded in this passage, refer to the *nations* which descended from them, and to their *temporal*, rather than their eternal, condition (⁴).

This result of our inquiry, as far as it has been at present conducted, must be borne in mind throughout the present chapter, in order to the full comprehension of our subject.

The next verse in Rom. ix., of which I need not now say further than that it refers to what has just preceded, runs thus:—"What shall we say then, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!" Upon this the apostle produces his arguments to prove that he has taken a right view of God's dealing thus with nations, and that he considers it righteous to treat them in that manner. We will consider those reasons in the next section.

PART III.

Remarks on Rom. chapter ix. continued, including verses 15—18.

THE first reason which the apostle assigns for explaining and confirming the view which he had just taken of the divine economy, is contained in the words following:—"For he saith to Moses I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." These words are taken from the book of Exodus, xxxiii. 19. In that place of our English bibles we find, indeed, "(I) will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." But the words which St. Paul actually used are an exact transcript of the passage of Exodus in that translation of the Old Testament which is constantly quoted in the New. Thus, then, the point is certain, that St. Paul had in his mind the very words written by Moses in Exodus xxxiii. 19. Now, then, to understand the meaning of the verse Rom. ix. 15, which is taken from the book of Exodus, let us ascertain what sense it bears in that part of Scripture from which it was derived. The words were spoken to Moses after God had mercifully designed to forbear to punish the

Israelites for their sin in making and worshipping the golden calf. We find that the sentence was uttered of the Jewish *nation*, and has no immediate reference to salvation or damnation in the world to come. It was delivered in allusion to God's again receiving that nation into favour as his Church and people after their heinous iniquity. Thus, like its forerunner, it applies to nations and to temporal interests.

So then, continues the apostle (v. 16), it is not of him that *willeth*, nor of him that *runneth*, but of God that showeth mercy.

This is the conclusion respecting Esau and Jacob. It was not Isaac's *willing* to bless Esau, nor Esau's *running* for the venison that bestowed or procured the blessing, but it depended upon God, who will confer such of his favours as we have seen he showed to Jacob, on whom he pleases, without any regard to their conduct.

All this, then, goes to prove that God is merciful to whom he will in granting outward privileges. The next part of this passage before us is intended to show that he condemns and rejects men according to his pleasure. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee: and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Now, in order for this passage to

support the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, it ought to teach that God created, or at least confirmed, Pharaoh in wickedness on purpose to condemn him to everlasting destruction, and for the display of his glory. But surely it requires no arguments to prove that the words just quoted are very different indeed from such as would convey so horrible an announcement. The passage, however, would tend to establish this identical doctrine, in all its monstrous extravagance, if it only affirmed that God hardened the heart of a man without any provocation on his part for that operation—if it taught that God first compels his rational creature to sin, and then hardens him for his unavoidable and inflicted wickedness. It certainly is a temporal punishment which Pharaoh underwent; but even a punishment of that nature for compulsory sin, does away with the rational idea of God's justice, unless this punishment might be considered as probationary and conducive to repentance. This is, in fact, the circumstance in the false interpretation of God's dealings with the Egyptian king, which does all the violence to our feelings and convictions. And a very grievous violence it is. For if God can be unjust in little, we could not comfortably conclude that he is not unjust also in much. If we could believe that God first made man commit sins, and then

punished him for those very offences, all security in the justice and mercy of God would be gone. We should, in that case, have to deal with a God who might capriciously cause us to incur damnation. This is the wretched conclusion in which some of those men would land us who are embarked in that ark of salvation constructed by the too incautious hand of the reformer of Geneva.

It shall be then my endeavour to prove that God did not harden the heart of Pharaoh until he was provoked so to do by his iniquities; and also to show that while the punishment was temporal, it referred not to Pharaoh individually, but to him and his people.

Several arguments, it is well known, have been resorted to, for the purpose of disproving any Calvinistic interpretation of the induration of Pharaoh's heart and his punishment. I believe that much which has been written in this matter is perfectly tenable; particularly the doctrine that what is said in scripture to be done by God, sometimes signifies that it was done by his permission, and that God is not revealed to have hardened Pharaoh's heart till he had hardened it himself on several occasions. (Bishop Heber's *Sermons in India*). Though it must, I think, be confessed that the declaration of God (Exod. iv. 21.) that he *would* harden

Pharaoh's heart must invalidate this view of the case, if we do not suppose it means that God designed to harden his heart, after he had provoked God to visit him in this manner, by the hardness which he had brought upon it through his own perverseness and rebellion. But I do not intend to repeat these minute criticisms ; for, however correct and satisfactory they may be, they appear to me not to be absolutely necessary, and would occupy a larger space than I am willing to afford. I shall content myself with merely showing briefly, but I trust irrefragably, that Pharaoh had provoked God by his conduct before he hardened his heart ; and that God actually assigns his previous sins as a reason for his punishments. This exhibition of the case will be amply sufficient to preclude Calvinism.

Now, before any one can adduce Pharaoh's case of induration as unprovoked, he must either know that Pharaoh had been a godly man before his heart was hardened by God, or he must know that though Pharaoh was a sinner, yet that God was not induced by his offences to withdraw his grace. But at the very least, it may be safely affirmed, that no person living knows that God was not provoked by Pharaoh's former sins, and therefore none have a right to assert that God hardened his

heart without provocation. This would be to exceed their knowledge. If we are totally unacquainted with Pharaoh's antecedent course of life, the anti-Calvinist is as warranted in supposing he had been an enormous offender against God as his opponent in imagining the direct reverse. Pharaoh's case might be one of great previous wickedness. It might be, on the lowest supposition, a case in our favour. It so happens, however, that we do know something of this same Pharaoh, prior to the most celebrated visitations of the divine displeasure. We know of him some evil, and evil which, we are informed, was the cause of his judgments. For in Exod. iii. 7, 8, God says, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their *taskmasters*. For I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." We know, also, from the reason of the case, that the arbitrary governor of the country, Pharaoh, must, of necessity, be the director of those taskmasters. He must be the principal cause of all the hardships and cruelties undergone by the people of God. He might have made them cease. And what we think credible, from reflection on circumstances, we find actually revealed. (Exod. v. 4-8). We see Pharaoh laying his rigorous injunctions on

the taskmasters who provoked those cries of the Israelites that entered the ears of their God. And if we carry our research farther into the book of the Acts (vii. 6. 7) we discover that the Egyptians would bring the Israelites into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years ; and that the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I *judge*, saith God. Here is abundant proof that that Pharaoh, who was king at the expiration of those four hundred years, had provoked God to *judge* him before the commencement of the plague, for it was he that then retained God's people under a state of oppressive cruelty. Thus, the scriptural evidence of Pharaoh's provocation of God previous to the infliction of his obduracy of heart is, I think, sufficiently manifest without more minute inquiries.

But there are other circumstances to be taken into the account in the interpretation of the verse before us. First, the punishment or visitation is only of a temporal or corporeal nature. I will, for the sake of brevity, leave the expression "I have raised thee up" entirely out of the question. It will be sufficient merely to observe the purpose for which Pharaoh is said to have been raised up; and to contemplate the execution of the decree as related in the Old Testament history. Now, it is unquestionably certain, that the verse under

consideration does not profess in plain terms that God raised up Pharaoh that he might be condemned to all eternity. It does not even intimate such a design. On the contrary, it openly declares that the divine act had a temporal object. It must, indeed, be confessed, that the first part of the sentence, which relates to the manifestation of the power of God, might possibly by itself be capable of an application to eternity. But it is not isolated. Even Exod. ix. 15., as well as the general history, appears to limit its signification. But, farther than this, the remainder of the sentence, the only part of it which is perfectly unambiguous, alludes solely to worldly punishment—"That my name may be declared throughout the earth." All that is indisputable in the passage refers to the present life; and when it is recollected that every plague which God brought upon Pharaoh (including even that which followed as most appropriate to the declaration in Exod. ix. 16, of which passage the verse we are examining is a quotation), was temporal; and when to these reflections is added the limitation already referred to in Exod. ix. 15, there is a probability closely approximating to certainty, that the whole *scope* of the passage does not extend beyond the present world.

A second circumstance, which I must include in this examination, is, that though Pharaoh alone

is mentioned in this verse, yet that both he and his subjects are, apparently, intended. It must be acknowledged that the judgments of God, and particularly that which followed the text (in Exod. ix. 22, &c.), involved the people; and the issue of the judgments is most assuredly one of the best interpreters of their intent. The design, however, to involve the nation is far from obscurely intimated. The verse which now holds the chief place in our inquiry, is immediately preceded in the chapter whence it is taken, by an explicit denunciation of a deadly plague against Pharaoh *and his people*. “Now will I stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence.” (Exod. ix. 15.) The same kind of extension to the people, when Pharaoh himself is alone mentioned, is observable in Exod. iv. 22, 23. We read there, “say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee, let my son go that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.” As, in the former part of the sentence, the word son represents the people, there could be no objection antecedently to examination to understand that the word as applied to Pharaoh in the latter should exceed the limits of his own household. And though Pharaoh’s son is alone named, we find

from Exod. xii. 29, 30, that more was intended, and that the visitation was meant to extend to the first-born not only of Pharaoh, but also of the people.

Besides which, it is more reasonable to believe, that the power of God was to be shown in the plagues and destruction of the nation rather than its monarch individually, as the object of the visitation was the declaration of the name of God throughout the world.

In a word, it is certain that the text quoted by St. Paul (Rom. ix. 17) regards temporal not eternal punishment, and for offences committed against God ; and, most probable, that it relates also to nations, not solely to an individual.

The apostle proceeds to sum up his allusion to the declaration of God contained in verse 15, and to the annunciation of Moses to Pharaoh, repeated in the 17th verse, as follows:—"Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The word "therefore" shows that the ideas of having mercy upon and hardening whom God will, refer in this place to the cases to which the apostle had just called our attention. And we have no authority from the passage for applying this general assertion to any but those cases, and at most others of a similar nature—that is, it is applicable only where

God had mercy on a nation in the present life, and also hardened a king or a nation, or a king and his subjects, after repeated provocations, and inflicted on them, in consequence of their iniquity, a temporal retribution.

We may close this section with remarking the same absence of Calvinism as at the end of the one preceding.

PART IV.

Remarks on Rom. ix. continued, including more particularly verses 19—24.

As soon as the apostle had given this interpretation of the will of God, he immediately anticipates an objection which might be made by the Jew, that God could not reasonably censure his countrymen for being such as he would cast off, as it was only in accordance to his will (19). “Thou wilt say unto me, why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?” The apostle represses this argument by asking, in an indignant manner (20)—“But who art thou that repliest against God; shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” (21). “Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto

dishonour?" (22). "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (23) and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?" Now, *several* arguments of great force combine to show that this disputation of the apostle is void of Calvinistic doctrine.

I. For instance, in the first place, the beginning of it, given in verse 20, "shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" must refer to the dispensations of God, of which the apostle had just spoken in verses 15-18. It was evidently in reference to those dispensations that the objection in verse 19 was propounded; and it is equally certain that it is against this objection that the apostle in verse 20 is directing his reply. As the apostle, therefore, in verse 20, is replying to an objection which refers to the dispensations of God, mentioned in verses 15-18, his reply in that verse must relate to those particular dispensations—that is, as has been shown in the examination of these verses, to dispensations of a temporal nature, affecting rather communities than individuals. Again, the following portion of the apostle's argumentation contained in verse 21, evidently relates to verse 20; but this, as we

have just seen, bears reference to the temporal dispensations alluded to in verses 15-18; therefore, verse 21 refers to the same dispensations, or to such as regard primarily the present state of existence, and the welfare of a plurality of our fellow-creatures. Similar remarks might be made upon the contents of verse 22, with respect to those which precede it; and of verse 23 in reference to verse 22, and the verses preceding. There is, in short, a regular concatenation of argument through the whole passage which we have quoted, each successive link connected with its predecessor; and the first, and therefore the last, dependent on the topic to which the entire series is annexed. The reasoning of the apostle throughout the quotation refers, in fact, to temporal dispensations as in vv. 12—18; how modified by v. 24, we shall soon perceive.

II. The second argument to the same effect is derivable from an inquiry into the signification which the phrases employed in this passage are *ascertained* to bear in other parts of scripture. There are a few expressions in Isaiah, xliv., xlv., and xlix, by which, indeed, it is rendered probable, that the words “shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” refer to the constitution and government of nations as the people of God. (See particularly Isaiah, xlv. 9.)

We here find a form of words extremely like that used by St. Paul. "Woe to him that striveth with his maker; shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou?" This passage referred to the Jewish people while, during the Babylonian captivity, they appear to have been offended with the Almighty, probably for designing to restore them to their country by the hand of a heathen. But the explanation of the latter part of verse 20 will be involved in that of verse 21, as the apostle appears to imply in this verse that the potter's having power over the clay is synonymous with God's right to make the thing formed as he pleases. The potter has power over the clay; and, therefore, man ought not to object that God has made him in the manner which the apostle designed; and his being made in that manner is only an instance of the power of the potter over the clay. As verse 21 will therefore interpret verse 20, it will be sufficient to examine that verse only for the interpretation of both. Now, this figure of the potter and the clay appears to be derived from the poetical imagery of the prophets; and in every instance, as far as I can discover, the idea refers not to private individuals but to bodies of men, or rather the Jewish nation collectively, and certainly to the condition of the parties concerned in some of their temporal rela-

tions. In evidence of this fact, Isaiah xlv. 9 may be a second time adduced. Its application need not be here repeated. Suffice it to observe that the clay is expressly mentioned, and in allusion to him who fashioneth it. In Jeremiah xviii. the application is more explicit and intelligible:—"The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, *O house of Israel*, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant [now we come to the explanation] at what instant, I shall speak concerning *a nation*, and concerning *a kingdom*, to *pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it*, if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning *a nation* and concerning *a kingdom*, to *build and to plant it*, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice then I will repent of the good wherewith

I said I will benefit them. Now, therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying," &c. &c. Here follows a denunciation of judgments to Judah of a temporal nature. (Jeremiah, xviii. 1-11. See also Isaiah, xxix. 16, and lxiv. 8). Thus then it is certain, that the phraseology of St. Paul is employed by the Holy Spirit, in regard to collective bodies of men, and with respect to their state in the present existence.

In the ix. chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the kindred expressions, viewed abstractedly from the context, might be pronounced of doubtful interpretation. In the other parts of Scripture, where similar phrases occur, their signification is evidently unambiguous. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude abstractedly, that, in the language of St. Paul, they bear the same interpretation as that which is alone definable from the writings of the prophets. This conclusion, and the inferences under the first head of our considerations, mutually corroborate each other.

The apostle proceeds, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory."

Here allusion to the idea of the potter and the clay is closely maintained, under the comparison of men, either to vessels made to be destroyed, agreeably to the practice of potters who break those of their manufactures which are not properly executed, or to vessels which had been prepared in such a way as to be worthy of preservation. Now, whatever effects are signified by the operations of the potter upon the clay in the preceding verses, must be intended, in the language of the two last introduced to our notice; destruction, then here be it observed, does not mean *literally* everlasting destruction; it expresses the destruction or the breaking of the vessel by the hand of the potter. And it does not *figuratively* signify everlasting destruction, unless one of the operations of the potter described in the verses preceding, represent, under a figure, everlasting destruction. To which it may be added, that “glory” in the next verse represents not eternal glory, if the well-executed specimens of the potter’s workmanship are not intended to refer to that state under the typical expression contained in verse 21. But, from the arguments comprised under this and the foregoing head of this division of our subject, it appears credible that the figure of the potter and clay is temporal and national in its purport. Such, therefore, may be believed to be the expressions in

verses 21, 22. On the whole, then, the consideration of the phraseology of the apostle is confirmatory of the interpretation given under the first division of the argument. But III. to proceed with our passage, we emerge at length from the language of metaphor and allegory to plain and literal expressions; and to such as show, in the first place, that under the notion of *vessels of mercy*, the apostle signifies a portion of mankind; for as soon as he has spoken of these vessels, he goes on, as if they were significant of some of the believers at least of his day. He says, immediately afterwards, "Even us whom he hath called not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles." This return to literalness of expression is of much further utility. It serves to shew not only that the figures of the potter and the clay and the vessels concern in some way the Jews and the Gentiles, but that the Apostle contemplates something more than a general call or election of the Gentiles, and something less than a total rejection of the Jews. He has in view not *merely* national elections and reprobations, but such national ones as include and admit of elections of individuals. The "vessels of mercy" are the persons "called" amongst the nations. This observation leads to another mode of discovering the interpretation of the figures derived from the

work of the potter. We have to ascertain the signification, in this particular place, of the calling and election of Jews and Gentiles. It will, I apprehend, be contended by the Calvinist, that by the persons *called* in the verse 24, we are to understand "the elect." If, then, it can be shown from other parts of scripture that "the elect" are chosen to a certainty of attaining everlasting salvation, then, of course, we err in totally denying the figurative language, just examined, to be expressive of election and reprobation with respect to eternity; and, if it is capable of proof, that God does not call men in this life to an infallible assurance of inevitable and eternal salvation, but only to the way by which it may be attained, provided they use the means of arriving at that glorious termination of their trials, then the whole passage from verse 9 to verse 24 will be one of complete consistency, all referring to men in their temporal condition—a consistency which would be destroyed if any part of the chain of argument were interrupted by expressions intended to be applied to individuals in reference to the indefectible inheritance of eternal glory.

That the purport of the "call" is such as we last intimate it will be the business of the two next divisions of this chapter to demonstrate. And when the absolute calling or election signified in

scripture is proved from other parts of it to be at the most of a temporal nature, it is hoped that this subdivision of our subject, consisting of the three foregoing independent arguments, each concurring with and confirming the rest, will be sufficiently complete, and that truth will have prevailed over one of the greatest Calvinistic errors, even without any evidence which will be afforded, that the gracious and avenging acts of our Heavenly Father are not performed without regard to the spiritual character and condition of his creatures.

But though we have reached the end of the most difficult part of the chapter before us, we are not arrived at the conclusion of the apostle's line of argument. This it will be advisable to pursue, as it will tend to establish further the accuracy of our previous interpretation.

It may be clearly perceived, by reading from the 23rd verse onward, as far as the end of the 31st, that the sense is not complete till we reach that period. The argument of the apostle is not closed at the 24th verse. He there speaks only of those who were already admitted into the Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, by way of exemplification of his doctrine. In verses 25-29 he refers to the authority of the prophets, in proof of the universal and particular Gentile calls, and the general rejection of the Jews. And it is only in verses 30 and 31

that we find the sum of what he had been advancing in his foregoing disputation. "What shall we say then?" he asks. This is his answer, viz., that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness—even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained the law of righteousness. Thus, in this conclusion of the main argument conducted in the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we discover that the apostle has been embracing in his mind, as the grand point for demonstration, that the mass of Jews was to be rejected from the Church, and the nations of the Gentiles to be admissible into that holy communion ; or, in a word, that the Gentiles are to be chosen in the place of the Jews—a summary of his argumentation, which perfectly accords with what we have stated to be the purport of the previous portion of the epistle, and therefore sustains the view which we took of that section of it, and one which, at the same time, harmonizes with the tenour which we have ascribed to the greater part of the present chapter, and so far supports the justice of our criticism. ⁽¹⁾

It deserves to be particularly noticed, that in the preceding extracts from Rom. ix. we not only remark a total absence of Calvinistic doctrine,

but are also supplied with one very positive argument in favour of the calling or election, signified in verse 23—being an appointment to spiritual advantages in the present world, and not to a certainty of heavenly happiness ; for the great benefit which appears to have been designed, is stated to be this—that the Gentiles have attained to the righteousness of faith, and that Israel hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

To a more general inquiry into the meaning of the term election, I proceed in the next division of the chapter.

PART V.

Examination of the remaining Forty Passages in the New Testament.

IN order that the Scriptures should countenance the opinions to which I am adverse, it would be necessary that God should, from them, appear to elect some men out of mankind for an infallible certainty of everlasting salvation, and without regard to any part of their circumstances or condition, and reject others on the same grounds, for the absolute purpose of a directly opposite destiny. To determine whether this is the mode of God's

dealings with his creatures, it will be advisable to observe the description given of election in his word. With this view, I purpose to bring before the notice of the reader every passage in the New Testament, where election is mentioned in terms. These passages amount, I believe, to forty-one in number, and many of them it will be necessary only to refer to and read over. Twenty-one may be disposed of in this manner, viz.:—Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31; Mark, xiii. 20, 22, 27; Luke, vi. 13—xviii. 7; John, vi. 70—xiii. 18—xv. 19; Acts, x. 41; Rom. viii. 33—ix. 11—xvi. 13; Col. iii. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 13; 2 John, 1 and 13; Tit. i. 1. It will, I think, be seen on the mere perusal of these texts, that they neither favour nor oppose our doctrine, as far as regards the expressions employed. The elect are very little more than mentioned by name; without the slightest description of the manner or the object of their election—arguments, therefore, for the peculiar notions of election, which are obnoxious to the opponent of Calvinism, must be sought elsewhere. There are two or three more passages, indeed, which could hardly in strictness be classed with those immediately preceding, and yet are by no means descriptive of the nature of election—for example, Matt. xx. 16—xxii. 14—“many be called but few chosen,—and many are called but few

are chosen." In the cases of the vineyard and marriage feast, we are presented with a striking contrast, particularly as to numbers, between the Jews and Gentiles, in their views of the offers of salvation, and in their reception of the Gospel, but whether the election of the recipients was irrespective, or whether it is necessarily followed by admission into Heaven, can be deduced only from more explicit and more definite revelations. A text more inappropriate to our purpose occurs in 2 Tim. ii. 4. St. Paul is there writing to Timothy, who was a minister of Christ, and instructing him that he, as a minister, ought not to involve himself much in the common business of the world. "Thou, therefore, says he, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." It is however, quite sufficient to observe, in this place, that Jesus Christ is not said to have chosen him to the certain admission into his heavenly kingdom, but to his service in the world. Acts, ix. 15 is equally irrelevant. The words which demand our most particular attention in this verse, are the following:—"But the Lord said he is a chosen vessel to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." To many readers this passage, of course, requires no expla-

according to our author, in this identical text. There, in his opinion, is the doctrine which the remainder of the chapter is intended only or principally to *illustrate*. I believe that as far as *illustration* is concerned, it extends to verses six and seven rather than think it is confined to the sixth alone. But, however this may be, we are not to look, according to that writer, for a proof of the Calvinistic doctrine under consideration in the subsequent section of the apostolical epistle (*Remarks*, p. 544). (²)

But as the opinion of the author of the *Remarks* will probably not be satisfactory to many professors of Calvinism, it will be necessary to inquire into the evidence of the doctrine contained in this passage. And, at all events, if the entire passage by itself does not reveal the doctrine of absolute election, and the text in verses six and seven equally fails in establishing it, it will unquestionably follow that it is deducible from neither one place nor the other.

I proceed, for the reason just assigned, immediately to the examination proposed at the head of this part of the present chapter; and, afterwards in continuation, to that of the remainder of the controverted passage.

The end of the eighth verse presents us with a very suitable observation for the commencement of

our investigation. The apostle there, in support of his assertion that the word of God had not been ineffectual, defines the children of God as the children only of the promise; upon which he appears to signify that God limits and extends the favours of which he is discoursing to whom he pleases, and that we are to ascribe to his promises such a fulfilment alone as he designed. He begins by an allusion to Isaac as Abraham's promised child, to whom the election of God was restricted in that generation, and then proceeds to consider at length the case of Jacob. He enlarges upon this topic in such a manner as to show that God chose him in preference to Esau, without any regard to their lives, but purely from his own will and pleasure, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works but of him that calleth." But now come the questions for what purpose was Jacob chosen in preference to Esau? Was it eternal happiness, for which the one was inevitably destined and from which the other was infallibly debarred? Are the election and rejection made with respect to those two persons *individually*, and for the two opposite fates which have just been mentioned? If these are the objects expressed by St. Paul, or even appear to be the divine purposes from other

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our investigation. The apostle there, in support of his assertion that the word of God had not been ineffectual, defines the children of God as the children only of the promise; upon which he appears to signify that God limits and extends the favours of which he is discoursing to whom he pleases, and that we are to ascribe to his promises such a fulfilment alone as he designed. He begins by an allusion to Isaac as Abraham's promised child, to whom the election of God was restricted in that generation, and then proceeds to consider at length the case of Jacob. He enlarges upon this topic in such a manner as to show that God chose him in preference to Esau, without any regard to their lives, but purely from his own will and pleasure, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works but of him that calleth." But now come the questions for what purpose was Jacob chosen in preference to Esau? Was it eternal happiness, for which the one was inevitably destined and from which the other was infallibly debarred? Are the election and rejection made with respect to those two persons *individually*, and for the two opposite fates which have just been mentioned? If these are the objects expressed by St. Paul, or even appear to be the divine purposes from other

parts of scripture, then, of course, the decrees of God respecting Jacob and Esau, before they had done either good or evil, and that the election might not be of works, must be such as would give the most rigid Calvinist his whole heart's desire. Perfectly satisfactory must it have been to the Calvinist, had God revealed to us, by St. Paul, that the preference of Jacob to Esau was to the one a certain assurance of exaltation to heaven, and to the other of eternal misery, Is this the doctrine of the apostle in the passage we are considering? Has he made a broad and explicit statement of the fact? or has he used language which can fairly be presumed to convey even the slightest intimation of that being his intention? The maintainer of Calvinistic opinions is bound to produce from this place, considered as declaratory of his doctrine, some show of argument, some shadow of proof, *at least*, before he can appeal to it with any decorum in his justification. It is not unreasonable to require of him some substantial solid foundation for his creed from this much vaunted passage of St. Paul. What shall be said of his dependence on this passage for support, if it can be shown that it does not contain the smallest particle of evidence to his peculiar tenet? Yet this is absolutely the case. For what says the apostle as to the election of Jacob? Merely

in effect, as will be seen instantly when we come to scrutinize his expression merely *that the elder shall serve the younger*. Is this the mighty, the formidable sentence on which mankind are to found to any, much less to any great extent, the horrible doctrine that God chose and rejected Jacob and his brother, without any regard to their works, to unavoidable opposite and everlasting destinies, and that he predestined them to be created for these several ends from all eternity—and both of them for the manifestation of his glory? Does it bear in its outward appearance any mark whatever of such a signification? Does it admit of any such interpretation when probed and examined with the instruments of criticism? Let us see. We asked, for one question, whether the sentence “the elder shall serve the younger” referred to Esau and Jacob personally and individually? I unhesitatingly answer that it does not concern them in their own personal lives, but that it refers to the nations, to the people that descended from those two children as their natural offspring. In defence of this decision we have, I believe, in the first place no reason for thinking that Esau, the elder brother, did serve the younger, Jacob. It may be objected that the blessing of Esau by Isaac, contained in Gen. xxvii. 39, 40, is modified by a prediction literally to that effect. But this prophetic sentence

has been understood by learned men not in its literal acceptation, and considered to signify that the servitude was to be performed, not by Esau himself, but by his posterity. And I observe several very obvious and cogent reasons for this interpretation. The history of the lives of Jacob and Esau, as recorded in the book of Genesis, seems, in fact, to render it highly improbable, not to say impossible, that Esau should have rendered Jacob personal service. The little that we do know of the relative condition of the two brothers is rather of a reverse description. We know that the younger did obeisance in after-life to the elder. (See Gen. xxxii. xxxiii.) But, while we are destitute of grounds for believing from their biography that the elder individually served the younger in his own person, we are expressly informed that the descendants of Esau, the Edomites (Gen. xxxvi. 1), served as subjects and tributaries to the posterity of Jacob (1 Chron. xviii. 13). Add to this, that part of the benediction to which reference has been made, with its immediate context, is as follows :—“ And by thy sword *shalt thou live and shalt serve* thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when *thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck* (Gen. xxvii. 40). Now it is quite reasonable to assume, indeed it would be unreasonable to do otherwise, that, by

the person mentioned in the former member of the verse as decreed to serve his brother, is intended either the individual or the nation, precisely as the individual or the nation is signified, in the subsequent member, by him who was to have the dominion and to break the yoke. Here, again, we have no proof from the history of the *personal* fulfilment of the latter part of the prophecy, but are in possession of positive evidence that the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, did revolt from the posterity of Jacob and assert their independence (2 Kings, viii. 20). Thus, on the assumption which we have premised as rational, it is not the individual, but the nation, that is signified by him who was decreed to serve his brother, because it was the nation and not the individual that appears to have recovered their liberty from a state of subjugation. Farther confirmations of the same conclusion are derivable from Isaac's blessing of Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 29), more particularly when it is recollected that his "mother's sons" must, in all probability, be other than her immediate progeny, which appears to have consisted only of himself and his brother; and from Gen. xlix. 8, compared with verse 1, and the benedictions in the chapter generally; and these circumstances respecting Esau and Jacob, that Esau did not live in servitude to Jacob, but stood towards him in rather

a contrary position; and that the nation founded by Esau became subject to the Jews who descended from Jacob, and afterwards achieved their emancipation agreeably to the preceding prophecy, together with the corroborations which we have noticed, might be alone sufficient to satisfy the rational inquirer that the subjection of the Edomites to the tribe of Judah was the completion of that prophetic declaration that the elder should serve the younger. But if there could be the smallest room to doubt of the propriety of this interpretation, it is entirely removed by a reference to the passage in the book of Genesis, from whence the clause under review is extracted (Gen. xxv. 23). We there find it fully stated, "It was said to Rebecca *two nations* are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thee, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger." Thus one of our questions is solved. The words "the elder shall serve the younger" regard nations, not individuals.—Again, we ask, is the election (Rom. ix. 11, 12) to everlasting happiness? The answer to this question has been partly involved in our preceding remarks on the *nationality* of the sentence. The service which the elder brother, or elder people, was to perform towards the younger, was a temporal or political service. It

regarded the condition of the two nations in this world; and though that service might have, and probably had, some reference to their respective fates in a future state of existence; yet the decree of the service bears no express relation, contains no direct assertion, as to the eternal destiny of either nation. The whole that is expressed is the service of one nation to be rendered to the other, a certain superiority of one over the other, in which it was to receive submission and obedience. And this superiority was of a secular nature. It was to take place in the present life. To imagine that this passage in itself speaks of the world to come is pure invention, and it is only a separate, an independent examination of it that we are now undertaking. It may be observed, that the mention of the ages of the two brothers is a farther evidence that the service spoken of referred to this sublunary state. It appears that there is something remarkable in the elder serving the younger, rather than the younger serving the elder, that it is some reversal of the order of things by the absolute decree of the Almighty. Now it is not easy to imagine that there is any general ordinance of God that the elder branches of a family should take precedence of their juniors in their admissibility to heavenly happiness. We can assign no probable reason for such an appointment. We find no trace

of it in revelation. But while we can devise no rational account of the reference to the seniority of the rejected brother, as a proof of God's arbitrary decision, in things eternal, it becomes remarkably appropriate, when viewed in relation to earthly circumstances, because the first-born had, according to Jewish laws and customs, certain rights and privileges which were inconsistent with that sentence which it seemed good to God to pronounce in the case of the two children of Rebecca as referable to individuals.

But then it may be objected that it is also recorded that Almighty God loved Jacob and hated Esau (*v.* 13); but is this, I would ask, sufficient evidence for reasonable conviction that God designed one for eternal happiness and the other for everlasting misery; and does it follow immediately from its being written that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, that he must have loved the one and hated the other continually? Was it not possible that the love or the hatred, or both, might have lasted only for a time, or rather that they might not be intended to express some temporal visitations? Is it satisfactorily plain that they signified eternal love and eternal hatred? Is there the least symptom of this being the extent of their duration? And have we any right to affix such a meaning upon them arbitrarily, or are we under any obli-

gation to receive such an interpretation without a tittle of evidence? Prejudice of this kind is, at least, as unreasonable as that prejudice which would pronounce, without inquiry, that it must be a temporary love or a temporary hatred.

Now, in order to ascertain the true import of the text, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," it deserves first to be noticed, that it by no means follows that God absolutely hated Esau at all. It may mean, if we examine into the words themselves, only that God loved Jacob more than Esau. There are, at least, two proofs of this in Scripture. In Luke, xiv. 26, it is written, "If any man come to me and *hate* not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Now, we are morally certain that it cannot be signified in this place, by the word *hate*, that we are actually to comply with the condition expressed by our Lord to the letter, because the word of God teaches that we are not to hate any man, not even our enemies, and not to be void of natural affection. And elsewhere we find our Saviour explaining his intent in a way quite agreeable to the view we have now taken (Matt. x.37). He says, "he that loveth father and mother *more* than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy

of me." He does not say he that loves father or mother in any degree is not worthy of him ; and, on the whole, we cannot do otherwise than infer that he signified in Luke, xiv. 26, that a man must love his Lord at least more than he does his nearest and dearest relatives. There is another passage, if possible, plainer. In Gen. xxix. 30, we read that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. In the very next verse it is written, "when the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*."—But it is not merely by verbal criticism that we arrive at this conclusion. We have positive proof in God's dealing with Esau that he did not hold him in utterly unqualified aversion. This sufficiently appears from the blessing which Isaac gave him on his dying bed. He doubtless bestowed the chief benediction on Jacob ; but he reserved another for Esau, and one of no small value, considering that even Jacob's was only of a temporal nature. "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above ; and by thy sword shalt thou live and serve thy brother ; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40 comp. with Gen. xxvii. 28, 29). This perfectly accords with the interpretation we have proposed of the word *hate* as applied to Esau, that God loved Esau less than Jacob, giving

him in proof of it by the prophetic voice of Isaac, a less valuable blessing.

Now, lastly, it must be observed, that the hatred spoken of related, according to the revelation of scripture, beyond which, of course, we are neither able nor required to proceed, to the present state of existence. For, first, it is evident that St. Paul employs the words in question, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," in reference to the temporal condition of the Jews and the Edomites. He cites them, not only in allusion to the decree that the elder should serve the younger, but in support of that particular sentence. No sooner had he appealed to the annunciation made to Rebecca, the elder should serve the younger, than he immediately implies that it was made in conformity with the divine profession, "Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated," in the manner following:—The elder shall serve the younger, *as* it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." We have just seen that the words "the elder shall serve the younger" are capable exclusively of a temporal application. It follows, therefore, that St. Paul, in introducing the revelation of the love of Jacob and the hatred of Esau, merely as conformable to this secular sense of the elder's service, has confined it, in this place, solely to a similar interpretation. And this is sufficient

for our purpose, as we are concerned at present only in ascertaining the purport of the words as they are used by the apostle in the passage before us. But we may advance one step further, and show, by reference to that book of the Old Testament from which the quotation is extracted, that it will not admit of any other construction. It is written, as St. Paul has said, in Mal. i. 2, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord, yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." That St. Paul referred to a portion of this sentence in his quotation Rom. ix. 13, is beyond all reasonable doubt; for though the words in our translations of the Old and New Testament are not exactly the same, yet St. Paul has himself employed (with a variation too trivial for objection)³ the identical terms which occur in that version of Malachi, from which it was the custom to quote in the time of Christ and the apostles; besides which the reference to the book of Malachi is the only one which can be made to any suitable original authority. But it is intuitively certain that the explanation, the interpretation of the words, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," in that place, is solely of a temporal description. Moreover, it will be recollected, that the blessings, which Isaac bestowed at his death on Jacob and Esau, were in

exclusive relation to this world, and that they contain the groundwork of all God's dispensations towards them.

We have now examined those verses of Rom. ix. which describe most particularly the case of Jacob and Esau; and it deserves to be noted, that it appears, on a variety of accounts, that the dispensations of God towards those patriarchs, as they are recorded in this passage, refer to the *nations* which descended from them, and to their *temporal*, rather than their eternal, condition (⁴).

This result of our inquiry, as far as it has been at present conducted, must be borne in mind throughout the present chapter, in order to the full comprehension of our subject.

The next verse in Rom. ix., of which I need not now say further than that it refers to what has just preceded, runs thus:—"What shall we say then, is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!" Upon this the apostle produces his arguments to prove that he has taken a right view of God's dealing thus with nations, and that he considers it righteous to treat them in that manner. We will consider those reasons in the next section.

PART III.

*Remarks on Rom. chapter ix. continued, including
verses 15—18.*

THE first reason which the apostle assigns for explaining and confirming the view which he had just taken of the divine economy, is contained in the words following:—"For he saith to Moses I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." These words are taken from the book of Exodus, xxxiii. 19. In that place of our English bibles we find, indeed, "(I) will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." But the words which St. Paul actually used are an exact transcript of the passage of Exodus in that translation of the Old Testament which is constantly quoted in the New. Thus, then, the point is certain, that St. Paul had in his mind the very words written by Moses in Exodus xxxiii. 19. Now, then, to understand the meaning of the verse Rom. ix. 15, which is taken from the book of Exodus, let us ascertain what sense it bears in that part of Scripture from which it was derived. The words were spoken to Moses after God had mercifully designed to forbear to punish the

Israelites for their sin in making and worshipping the golden calf. We find that the sentence was uttered of the Jewish *nation*, and has no immediate reference to salvation or damnation in the world to come. It was delivered in allusion to God's again receiving that nation into favour as his Church and people after their heinous iniquity. Thus, like its forerunner, it applies to nations and to temporal interests.

So then, continues the apostle (v. 16), it is not of him that *willeth*, nor of him that *runneth*, but of God that showeth mercy.

This is the conclusion respecting Esau and Jacob. It was not Isaac's *willing* to bless Esau, nor Esau's *running* for the venison that bestowed or procured the blessing, but it depended upon God, who will confer such of his favours as we have seen he showed to Jacob, on whom he pleases, without any regard to their conduct.

All this, then, goes to prove that God is merciful to whom he will in granting outward privileges. The next part of this passage before us is intended to show that he condemns and rejects men according to his pleasure. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee: and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Now, in order for this passage to

support the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, it ought to teach that God created, or at least confirmed, Pharaoh in wickedness on purpose to condemn him to everlasting destruction, and for the display of his glory. But surely it requires no arguments to prove that the words just quoted are very different indeed from such as would convey so horrible an announcement. The passage, however, would tend to establish this identical doctrine, in all its monstrous extravagance, if it only affirmed that God hardened the heart of a man without any provocation on his part for that operation—if it taught that God first compels his rational creature to sin, and then hardens him for his unavoidable and inflicted wickedness. It certainly is a temporal punishment which Pharaoh underwent; but even a punishment of that nature for compulsory sin, does away with the rational idea of God's justice, unless this punishment might be considered as probationary and conducive to repentance. This is, in fact, the circumstance in the false interpretation of God's dealings with the Egyptian king, which does all the violence to our feelings and convictions. And a very grievous violence it is. For if God can be unjust in little, we could not comfortably conclude that he is not unjust also in much. If we could believe that God first made man commit sins, and then

punished him for those very offences, all security in the justice and mercy of God would be gone. We should, in that case, have to deal with a God who might capriciously cause us to incur damnation. This is the wretched conclusion in which some of those men would land us who are embarked in that ark of salvation constructed by the too incautious hand of the reformer of Geneva.

It shall be then my endeavour to prove that God did not harden the heart of Pharaoh until he was provoked so to do by his iniquities; and also to show that while the punishment was temporal, it referred not to Pharaoh individually, but to him and his people.

Several arguments, it is well known, have been resorted to, for the purpose of disproving any Calvinistic interpretation of the induration of Pharaoh's heart and his punishment. I believe that much which has been written in this matter is perfectly tenable; particularly the doctrine that what is said in scripture to be done by God, sometimes signifies that it was done by his permission, and that God is not revealed to have hardened Pharaoh's heart till he had hardened it himself on several occasions. (Bishop Heber's *Sermons in India*). Though it must, I think, be confessed that the declaration of God (Exod. iv. 21) that he *would* harden

Pharaoh's heart must invalidate this view of the case, if we do not suppose it means that God designed to harden his heart, after he had provoked God to visit him in this manner, by the hardness which he had brought upon it through his own perverseness and rebellion. But I do not intend to repeat these minute criticisms ; for, however correct and satisfactory they may be, they appear to me not to be absolutely necessary, and would occupy a larger space than I am willing to afford. I shall content myself with merely showing briefly, but I trust irrefragably, that Pharaoh had provoked God by his conduct before he hardened his heart ; and that God actually assigns his previous sins as a reason for his punishments. This exhibition of the case will be amply sufficient to preclude Calvinism.

Now, before any one can adduce Pharaoh's case of induration as unprovoked, he must either know that Pharaoh had been a godly man before his heart was hardened by God, or he must know that though Pharaoh was a sinner, yet that God was not induced by his offences to withdraw his grace. But at the very least, it may be safely affirmed, that no person living knows that God was not provoked by Pharaoh's former sins, and therefore none have a right to assert that God hardened his

heart without provocation. This would be to exceed their knowledge. If we are totally unacquainted with Pharaoh's antecedent course of life, the anti-Calvinist is as warranted in supposing he had been an enormous offender against God as his opponent in imagining the direct reverse. Pharaoh's case might be one of great previous wickedness. It might be, on the lowest supposition, a case in our favour. It so happens, however, that we do know something of this same Pharaoh, prior to the most celebrated visitations of the divine displeasure. We know of him some evil, and evil which, we are informed, was the cause of his judgments. For in Exod. iii. 7, 8, God says, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their *taskmasters*. For I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." We know, also, from the reason of the case, that the arbitrary governor of the country, Pharaoh, must, of necessity, be the director of those taskmasters. He must be the principal cause of all the hardships and cruelties undergone by the people of God. He might have made them cease. And what we think credible, from reflection on circumstances, we find actually revealed. (Exod. v. 4-8). We see Pharaoh laying his rigorous injunctions on

the taskmasters who provoked those cries of the Israelites that entered the ears of their God. And if we carry our research farther into the book of the Acts (vii. 6. 7) we discover that the Egyptians would bring the Israelites into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years ; and that the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I *judge*, saith God. Here is abundant proof that that Pharaoh, who was king at the expiration of those four hundred years, had provoked God to *judge* him before the commencement of the plague, for it was he that then retained God's people under a state of oppressive cruelty. Thus, the scriptural evidence of Pharaoh's provocation of God previous to the infliction of his obduracy of heart is, I think, sufficiently manifest without more minute inquiries.

But there are other circumstances to be taken into the account in the interpretation of the verse before us. First, the punishment or visitation is only of a temporal or corporeal nature. I will, for the sake of brevity, leave the expression " I have raised thee up" entirely out of the question. It will be sufficient merely to observe the purpose for which Pharaoh is said to have been raised up; and to contemplate the execution of the decree as related in the Old Testament history. Now, it is unquestionably certain, that the verse under

consideration does not profess in plain terms that God raised up Pharaoh that he might be condemned to all eternity. It does not even intimate such a design. On the contrary, it openly declares that the divine act had a temporal object. It must, indeed, be confessed, that the first part of the sentence, which relates to the manifestation of the power of God, might possibly by itself be capable of an application to eternity. But it is not isolated. Even Exod. ix. 15., as well as the general history, appears to limit its signification. But, farther than this, the remainder of the sentence, the only part of it which is perfectly unambiguous, alludes solely to worldly punishment—"That my name may be declared throughout the earth." All that is indisputable in the passage refers to the present life; and when it is recollected that every plague which God brought upon Pharaoh (including even that which followed as most appropriate to the declaration in Exod. ix. 16, of which passage the verse we are examining is a quotation), was temporal; and when to these reflections is added the limitation already referred to in Exod. ix. 15, there is a probability closely approximating to certainty, that the whole *scope* of the passage does not extend beyond the present world.

A second circumstance, which I must include in this examination, is, that though Pharaoh alone

is mentioned in this verse, yet that both he and his subjects are, apparently, intended. It must be acknowledged that the judgments of God, and particularly that which followed the text (in Exod. ix. 22, &c.), involved the people; and the issue of the judgments is most assuredly one of the best interpreters of their intent. The design, however, to involve the nation is far from obscurely intimated. The verse which now holds the chief place in our inquiry, is immediately preceded in the chapter whence it is taken, by an explicit denunciation of a deadly plague against Pharaoh *and his people*. “Now will I stretch out my hand that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence.” (Exod. ix. 15.) The same kind of extension to the people, when Pharaoh himself is alone mentioned, is observable in Exod. iv. 22, 23. We read there, “say unto Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee, let my son go that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.” As, in the former part of the sentence, the word son represents the people, there could be no objection antecedently to examination to understand that the word as applied to Pharaoh in the latter should exceed the limits of his own household. And though Pharaoh’s son is alone named, we find

from Exod. xii. 29, 30, that more was intended, and that the visitation was meant to extend to the first-born not only of Pharaoh, but also of the people.

Besides which, it is more reasonable to believe, that the power of God was to be shown in the plagues and destruction of the nation rather than its monarch individually, as the object of the visitation was the declaration of the name of God throughout the world.

In a word, it is certain that the text quoted by St. Paul (Rom. ix. 17) regards temporal not eternal punishment, and for offences committed against God ; and, most probable, that it relates also to nations, not solely to an individual.

The apostle proceeds to sum up his allusion to the declaration of God contained in verse 15, and to the annunciation of Moses to Pharaoh, repeated in the 17th verse, as follows:—"Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The word "therefore" shows that the ideas of having mercy upon and hardening whom God will, refer in this place to the cases to which the apostle had just called our attention. And we have no authority from the passage for applying this general assertion to any but those cases, and at most others of a similar nature—that is, it is applicable only where

God had mercy on a nation in the present life, and also hardened a king or a nation, or a king and his subjects, after repeated provocations, and inflicted on them, in consequence of their iniquity, a temporal retribution.

We may close this section with remarking the same absence of Calvinism as at the end of the one preceding.

PART IV.

Remarks on Rom. ix. continued, including more particularly verses 19—24.

As soon as the apostle had given this interpretation of the will of God, he immediately anticipates an objection which might be made by the Jew, that God could not reasonably censure his countrymen for being such as he would cast off, as it was only in accordance to his will (19). “Thou wilt say unto me, why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?” The apostle represses this argument by asking, in an indignant manner (20)—“But who art thou that repliest against God; shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” (21). “Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto

dishonour?" (22). "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (23) and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory?" Now, *several* arguments of great force combine to show that this disputation of the apostle is void of Calvinistic doctrine.

I. For instance, in the first place, the beginning of it, given in verse 20, "shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" must refer to the dispensations of God, of which the apostle had just spoken in verses 15-18. It was evidently in reference to those dispensations that the objection in verse 19 was propounded; and it is equally certain that it is against this objection that the apostle in verse 20 is directing his reply. As the apostle, therefore, in verse 20, is replying to an objection which refers to the dispensations of God, mentioned in verses 15-18, his reply in that verse must relate to those particular dispensations—that is, as has been shown in the examination of these verses, to dispensations of a temporal nature, affecting rather communities than individuals. Again, the following portion of the apostle's argumentation contained in verse 21, evidently relates to verse 20; but this, as we

have just seen, bears reference to the temporal dispensations alluded to in verses 15-18; therefore, verse 21 refers to the same dispensations, or to such as regard primarily the present state of existence, and the welfare of a plurality of our fellow-creatures. Similar remarks might be made upon the contents of verse 22, with respect to those which precede it; and of verse 23 in reference to verse 22, and the verses preceding. There is, in short, a regular concatenation of argument through the whole passage which we have quoted, each successive link connected with its predecessor; and the first, and therefore the last, dependent on the topic to which the entire series is annexed. The reasoning of the apostle throughout the quotation refers, in fact, to temporal dispensations as in vv. 12—18; how modified by v. 24, we shall soon perceive.

II. The second argument to the same effect is derivable from an inquiry into the signification which the phrases employed in this passage are *ascertained* to bear in other parts of scripture. There are a few expressions in Isaiah, xlv., xlv., and xlix, by which, indeed, it is rendered probable, that the words “shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?” refer to the constitution and government of nations as the people of God. (See particularly Isaiah, xlv. 9.)

We here find a form of words extremely like that used by St. Paul. "Woe to him that striveth with his maker; shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou?" This passage referred to the Jewish people while, during the Babylonian captivity, they appear to have been offended with the Almighty, probably for designing to restore them to their country by the hand of a heathen. But the explanation of the latter part of verse 20 will be involved in that of verse 21, as the apostle appears to imply in this verse that the potter's having power over the clay is synonymous with God's right to make the thing formed as he pleases. The potter has power over the clay; and, therefore, man ought not to object that God has made him in the manner which the apostle designed; and his being made in that manner is only an instance of the power of the potter over the clay. As verse 21 will therefore interpret verse 20, it will be sufficient to examine that verse only for the interpretation of both. Now, this figure of the potter and the clay appears to be derived from the poetical imagery of the prophets; and in every instance, as far as I can discover, the idea refers not to private individuals but to bodies of men, or rather the Jewish nation collectively, and certainly to the condition of the parties concerned in some of their temporal rela-

tions. In evidence of this fact, Isaiah xlv. 9 may be a second time adduced. Its application need not be here repeated. Suffice it to observe that the clay is expressly mentioned, and in allusion to him who fashioneth it. In Jeremiah xviii. the application is more explicit and intelligible:—"The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, *O house of Israel*, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant [now we come to the explanation] at what instant, I shall speak concerning *a nation*, and concerning *a kingdom*, to *pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it*, if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning *a nation* and concerning *a kingdom*, to *build and to plant it*, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice then I will repent of the good wherewith

I said I will benefit them. Now, therefore, go to, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying," &c. &c. Here follows a denunciation of judgments to Judah of a temporal nature. (Jeremiah, xviii. 1-11. See also Isaiah, xxix. 16, and lxiv. 8). Thus then it is certain, that the phraseology of St. Paul is employed by the Holy Spirit, in regard to collective bodies of men, and with respect to their state in the present existence.

In the ix. chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the kindred expressions, viewed abstractedly from the context, might be pronounced of doubtful interpretation. In the other parts of Scripture, where similar phrases occur, their signification is evidently unambiguous. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude abstractedly, that, in the language of St. Paul, they bear the same interpretation as that which is alone definable from the writings of the prophets. This conclusion, and the inferences under the first head of our considerations, mutually corroborate each other.

The apostle proceeds, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory."

Here allusion to the idea of the potter and the clay is closely maintained, under the comparison of men, either to vessels made to be destroyed, agreeably to the practice of potters who break those of their manufactures which are not properly executed, or to vessels which had been prepared in such a way as to be worthy of preservation. Now, whatever effects are signified by the operations of the potter upon the clay in the preceding verses, must be intended, in the language of the two last introduced to our notice; destruction, then here be it observed, does not mean *literally* everlasting destruction; it expresses the destruction or the breaking of the vessel by the hand of the potter. And it does not *figuratively* signify everlasting destruction, unless one of the operations of the potter described in the verses preceding, represent, under a figure, everlasting destruction. To which it may be added, that “glory” in the next verse represents not eternal glory, if the well-executed specimens of the potter’s workmanship are not intended to refer to that state under the typical expression contained in verse 21. But, from the arguments comprised under this and the foregoing head of this division of our subject, it appears credible that the figure of the potter and clay is temporal and national in its purport. Such, therefore, may be believed to be the expressions in

verses 21, 22. On the whole, then, the consideration of the phraseology of the apostle is confirmatory of the interpretation given under the first division of the argument. But III. to proceed with our passage, we emerge at length from the language of metaphor and allegory to plain and literal expressions; and to such as show, in the first place, that under the notion of *vessels of mercy*, the apostle signifies a portion of mankind; for as soon as he has spoken of these vessels, he goes on, as if they were significant of some of the believers at least of his day. He says, immediately afterwards, "Even us whom he hath called not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles." This return to literalness of expression is of much further utility. It serves to shew not only that the figures of the potter and the clay and the vessels concern in some way the Jews and the Gentiles, but that the Apostle contemplates something more than a general call or election of the Gentiles, and something less than a total rejection of the Jews. He has in view not *merely* national elections and reprobations, but such national ones as include and admit of elections of individuals. The "vessels of mercy" are the persons "called" amongst the nations. This observation leads to another mode of discovering the interpretation of the figures derived from the

work of the potter. We have to ascertain the signification, in this particular place, of the calling and election of Jews and Gentiles. It will, I apprehend, be contended by the Calvinist, that by the persons *called* in the verse 24, we are to understand “the elect.” If, then, it can be shown from other parts of scripture that “the elect” are chosen to a certainty of attaining everlasting salvation, then, of course, we err in totally denying the figurative language, just examined, to be expressive of election and reprobation with respect to eternity; and, if it is capable of proof, that God does not call men in this life to an infallible assurance of inevitable and eternal salvation, but only to the way by which it may be attained, provided they use the means of arriving at that glorious termination of their trials, then the whole passage from verse 9 to verse 24 will be one of complete consistency, all referring to men in their temporal condition—a consistency which would be destroyed if any part of the chain of argument were interrupted by expressions intended to be applied to individuals in reference to the indefectible inheritance of eternal glory.

That the purport of the “call” is such as we last intimate it will be the business of the two next divisions of this chapter to demonstrate. And when the absolute calling or election signified in

scripture is proved from other parts of it to be at the most of a temporal nature, it is hoped that this subdivision of our subject, consisting of the three foregoing independent arguments, each concurring with and confirming the rest, will be sufficiently complete, and that truth will have prevailed over one of the greatest Calvinistic errors, even without any evidence which will be afforded, that the gracious and avenging acts of our Heavenly Father are not performed without regard to the spiritual character and condition of his creatures.

But though we have reached the end of the most difficult part of the chapter before us, we are not arrived at the conclusion of the apostle's line of argument. This it will be advisable to pursue, as it will tend to establish further the accuracy of our previous interpretation.

It may be clearly perceived, by reading from the 23rd verse onward, as far as the end of the 31st, that the sense is not complete till we reach that period. The argument of the apostle is not closed at the 24th verse. He there speaks only of those who were already admitted into the Church, whether Jews or Gentiles, by way of exemplification of his doctrine. In verses 25-29 he refers to the authority of the prophets, in proof of the universal and particular Gentile calls, and the general rejection of the Jews. And it is only in verses 30 and 31

that we find the sum of what he had been advancing in his foregoing disputation. "What shall we say then?" he asks. This is his answer, viz., that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness—even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained the law of righteousness. Thus, in this conclusion of the main argument conducted in the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we discover that the apostle has been embracing in his mind, as the grand point for demonstration, that the mass of Jews was to be rejected from the Church, and the nations of the Gentiles to be admissible into that holy communion; or, in a word, that the Gentiles are to be chosen in the place of the Jews—a summary of his argumentation, which perfectly accords with what we have stated to be the purport of the previous portion of the epistle, and therefore sustains the view which we took of that section of it, and one which, at the same time, harmonizes with the tenour which we have ascribed to the greater part of the present chapter, and so far supports the justice of our criticism. ⁽¹⁾

It deserves to be particularly noticed, that in the preceding extracts from Rom. ix. we not only remark a total absence of Calvinistic doctrine,

but are also supplied with one very positive argument in favour of the calling or election, signified in verse 23—being an appointment to spiritual advantages in the present world, and not to a certainty of heavenly happiness ; for the great benefit which appears to have been designed, is stated to be this—that the Gentiles have attained to the righteousness of faith, and that Israel hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

To a more general inquiry into the meaning of the term election, I proceed in the next division of the chapter.

PART V.

Examination of the remaining Forty Passages in the New Testament.

IN order that the Scriptures should countenance the opinions to which I am adverse, it would be necessary that God should, from them, appear to elect some men out of mankind for an infallible certainty of everlasting salvation, and without regard to any part of their circumstances or condition, and reject others on the same grounds, for the absolute purpose of a directly opposite destiny. To determine whether this is the mode of God's

dealings with his creatures, it will be advisable to observe the description given of election in his word. With this view, I purpose to bring before the notice of the reader every passage in the New Testament, where election is mentioned in terms. These passages amount, I believe, to forty-one in number, and many of them it will be necessary only to refer to and read over. Twenty-one may be disposed of in this manner, viz.:—Matt. xxiv. 22, 24, 31; Mark, xiii. 20, 22, 27; Luke, vi. 13—xviii. 7; John, vi. 70—xiii. 18—xv. 19; Acts, x. 41; Rom. viii. 33—ix. 11—xvi. 13; Col. iii. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 13; 2 John, 1 and 13; Tit. i. 1. It will, I think, be seen on the mere perusal of these texts, that they neither favour nor oppose our doctrine, as far as regards the expressions employed. The elect are very little more than mentioned by name; without the slightest description of the manner or the object of their election—arguments, therefore, for the peculiar notions of election, which are obnoxious to the opponent of Calvinism, must be sought elsewhere. There are two or three more passages, indeed, which could hardly in strictness be classed with those immediately preceding, and yet are by no means descriptive of the nature of election—for example, Matt. xx. 16—xxii. 14—“many be called but few chosen,—and many are called but few

are chosen." In the cases of the vineyard and marriage feast, we are presented with a striking contrast, particularly as to numbers, between the Jews and Gentiles, in their views of the offers of salvation, and in their reception of the Gospel, but whether the election of the recipients was irrespective, or whether it is necessarily followed by admission into Heaven, can be deduced only from more explicit and more definite revelations. A text more inappropriate to our purpose occurs in 2 Tim. ii. 4. St. Paul is there writing to Timothy, who was a minister of Christ, and instructing him that he, as a minister, ought not to involve himself much in the common business of the world. "Thou, therefore, says he, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." It is however, quite sufficient to observe, in this place, that Jesus Christ is not said to have chosen him to the certain admission into his heavenly kingdom, but to his service in the world. Acts, ix. 15 is equally irrelevant. The words which demand our most particular attention in this verse, are the following:—"But the Lord said he is a chosen vessel to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." To many readers this passage, of course, requires no expla-

nation. I must, however, observe that it is written in connexion with the conversion of St. Paul, and in reference particularly to his well-known commission to preach to the Gentiles;—after Christ had spoken to him from heaven, he was commanded to go to the house of one Judas, and while he was there a man, by the name of Ananias, was informed by God in a vision, that he should visit the same dwelling and inquire for Paul, and lay his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight. Ananias, when he saw the vision from the Lord, was unwilling to go as he was directed, because he had heard of his opposition to the religion of Christ (see vv. 13, 14); whereupon our blessed Lord said unto him, “Go thy way (*i.e.*) go to the house, as I have commanded thee, for he (*i.e.*) St. Paul, is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles.” All, then, that is expressed in this passage is not that St. Paul was chosen for the certainty of eternal salvation, but merely as a preacher of the Gospel to the heathen. This text, therefore, like the preceding, proves nothing against the doctrine which I advocate.

In Acts xxii. 14, we find another expression of the same kind, in relation to the same distinguished person; but the object of the election is clearly stated, and is evidently distinct from the infallibility of eternal salvation. He was informed

by Ananias that God had chosen him to know his will, and to *see* that Just one, and to *hear the voice* of his mouth. And only four verses further on we see those parts of these purposes fulfilled that might appear most adverse to our views ; for while he was in a trance, he *saw Christ saying* unto him “ Make haste, depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles ;” and, indeed, the ultimate purpose of the election had been very unequivocally declared in v. 15, “ for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.” Thus the purport of this latter passage is perfectly consonant with the last that we have considered, and bears no reference to the kind of election which we denounce.

The next passage which I adduce is one which is extremely available for the purpose of the anti-Calvinist, as will be seen in a subsequent portion of the present work, and from which it is impossible to derive the smallest support of the opinions of his opponents (2 Pet. i. 10), “ Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” That this passage does not describe the kind of election intended, except that it is not one that cannot, at least in some way, fail, is evident, and requires no further comment in proof of its insufficiency to establish the Calvinistic tenet.

There is one more text, of our class (John xv.

16), which is perfectly distinct, in all probability, from the doctrine of election in the most spiritual sense of the term, and certainly does not express the election of Calvinism. Our Saviour says in that place, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." It may be first observed that this text does not amount to an assertion that the persons addressed were chosen or ordained to an inevitable accession to the kingdom of God in Heaven. These persons were chosen and ordained, that they might go and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain, &c. &c. The words express the objects of their choice and ordination; and even if these objects were eternal salvation, the words are perfectly distinct from a declaration, that they must of necessity be accomplished, in any of the parties concerned, and still less in all of them without exception. Their necessary accomplishment is not expressed, and can only be assumed without any authority from the language. And this evident insufficiency of the language to sustain the Calvinistic doctrine, is supported and confirmed by another consideration, that the words were not spoken to believers in general, but especially to

the twelve Apostles. Now, there is no doubt that the twelve Apostles could not be declared by Christ to be ordained to a certainty of everlasting salvation. There is one fact which alone settles the question. In all fair reasoning, it must be supposed that Judas Iscariot was intended, among those who were addressed, in the text in contemplation. It was certainly the Apostles to whom our Saviour spoke, and in the Gospel, the whole number of them appears to be frequently signified where the contrary is not expressed. And it is beyond all question that Christ had chosen Judas among the rest. As one evidence of this fact may be cited Luke, vi. 13 and 16. But Judas appears to have incurred everlasting condemnation (St. John, xvii. 12. ; Acts, i. 25); and as he may be thought to be included in the text, Christ cannot with truth be understood from that passage to have chosen and ordained his Apostles as objects of his indefectible grace, and as final inheritors of eternal glory.

But another mode remains of showing the insufficiency of this text to establish the Calvinistic doctrine of election; the probable determination of the true sense of the passage. The persons chosen and ordained were, we have observed, the Apostles. Now, the election and ordination of the Apostles have been very unambiguously stated in Scripture. This election and

this ordination are elsewhere represented, as my readers may remember, not as made to the certain inevitable enjoyment of eternal salvation, or without any reference to their characters. An account of the mode in which our Saviour chose them has been transmitted to us (Matth. iv. 19—21 ; Matt. ix. 9). The objects of that choice have also been clearly revealed ; one of them could not be the certainty of salvation in consequence of the fate of Judas the traitor. But we are plainly informed that our Saviour chose them to make them fishers of men (Matt. iv. 19, or Mark, i. 17) ; ordained them that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. (St. Mark, iii. 14, 15 ; Matt. x. 1 ; xxviii. 19, 20).

And the selection was not made irrespectively of character and circumstances ; Christ chose them partly because they were unlearned, uninfluent members of the community. (1 Cor. i. 27, 28). He chose them, probably, because he saw they were, generally speaking, fit for the service which he intended them to fulfil. Now, the great purposes of their election and ordination are very significantly described in the verse at present under discussion. Our Saviour reminds them that they did not choose him, but he them, and ordained

them that they should *go* and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain; that “whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” The intention of the appointment having been elsewhere plainly stated, it is reasonable to interpret this passage, which would, by itself, be of doubtful import, by the aid of those less mysterious revelations. That they should *go* then is very strikingly referable to the Apostles (Matt. xxviii. 19), “*going* into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and *going* to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt. x. 5, 6, 7); and the bringing forth fruit which should remain, may be very reasonably understood, of converting men to the Church, which should remain to the end of the world (Matt. xvi. 18; xxviii. 20). The concluding clause also is a repetition of what was spoken in John xiv. 13, and in close connexion with the mention of the works of the Apostleship. This is a further clue to the interpretation of our text, thus more evidently declaratory of God’s design to assist the Apostles in their work according to their prayers, and of Christ’s choosing them for the ministry. We have three substantial grounds, therefore, for excluding this text from the advocacy of Calvinistic election.

From passages of scripture, most of which are evidently without the smallest comment, uncon-

nected with the point at issue, we proceed to others of a very different character. I select those first which seem to indicate very satisfactorily that the condition to which Christians are elected by God, is one which refers to the present state of existence. The first I notice are Rom. ix. 24 and xi. 7, and I begin by reverting to the observation made near the close of chap. iv., part iv., as applicable to the remnant, according to the election of grace, mentioned in Rom. xi. 5, by comparing this verse and verse 7 of the same chapter with Rom. ix. 24, 30, 31, it is very easily deducible, that the election signified was to the advantage of a spiritual life on earth. It is something which the election "hath obtained" and it is evidently "righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." The next text to which I refer, is 1 Pet. 1, 2. The Apostle there pronounces his disciples to be *elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood* of Jesus Christ. Here, there cannot be the slightest question that the election respects the condition of the elect in the probationary state.—A similar judgment may be pronounced with almost equal certainty relative to 1 Thess. i. 4. The Apostle, if his observations which follow verse 4 be read in connexion with that verse, is evidently assigning his reasons for knowing that the Thessalonians were elected of God. These appear to be all

of a description which can be applied to man, only while he continues in the world.—Again, in St. James, ii. 5, we read “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him. The position into which the persons elected are here represented as introduced is beyond all question identified with that in which men are placed in the present state of probation. The language of the Apostle can signify an election to a security of eternal life, only on the supposition of the impossibility of a final state of apostasy of which the incorrectness will be shown in the succeeding portion of this chapter. (See for the present Rom. viii. 17).—A fifth passage, in which the same doctrine is revealed, as we have noticed in the four last quotations is Eph. i. 4. 5. “According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself.” Here, again, the expressions are applicable to the present life, and I believe exclusively to that state according to the usage of Scripture in other places, “that we should be *holy and without blame* before him *in love*; having *predestinated us unto the adoption of children*.” I

believe, in every instance where Christians are represented as living "in love," and the *sons or the children of God*, it is with reference to the life which now is. (See, for example, Eph. iii. 17; iv. 2, 15, 16; v. 2; Col. ii. 2; 1 Thess. iii. 12; v. 13; 2 Tim. i. 13; 1 John, iv. 16, 18; Eph. v. 1; Heb. xii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 14; 1 John, iii. 10; John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14, 19; Gal. iv. 5—7; Phil. ii. 15; 1 John, iii. 1, 2). I do not exclude Rom. viii. 19, as it is from the general use of the terms employed to be understood of the manifestation of those who had been sons of God on earth.—And in affirmation of the doctrine for which I contend, I adduce also 1 Pet. ii. 9, though it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of this passage is not so ascertainable as that of those which have preceded:—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people—that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The purpose of the election, and of being made a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, is here described as the declaration or enunciation of the goodness of God. It appears, I think, most probable, that this enunciation signifies a work of the present state of being. (1st.) The word employed by the Apostle seems adapted to the publication of God's goodness

among mankind. (2ndly.) It is an interpretation supported by 1 Pet. ii. 5, where the design of the same people, as a holy priesthood, is descriptively confined to this life. (3rdly). By the fate of the "disobedient" mentioned in verse 8, who are set in opposition to the disciples of the Apostle; and lastly, by various passages in the Septuagint and the New Testament, of similar import or expression. (Deut. xiv. 2; xxvi. 18; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Isaiah, xlii. 8, 12; xliii. 21; lxiii. 7; Acts, xx. 27; Rom. ix. 17; Luke, ix. 60.) To these considerations it may be added that it is reasonable to believe the passage in question to be conformable to the others which we have previously adduced, as admitting a definite interpretation.

As to the texts which remain, there is only another which, under any very literal form of expression, describes the nature of election. It is one which appears, probably, to some persons to be decisive against our doctrine, but which must, in fact, be interpreted much in the manner alluded to at the conclusion of the last paragraph. The passage which I have in mind is 2 Thess. ii. 13, wherein it is written, "God hath chosen you to salvation." There are those who imagine that salvation in this place, and in all other passages of Scripture, must signify the blissful condition of the saved in Heaven. But this, as is well known,

is by no means the case. The word salvation occurs about forty times in the New Testament. In many instances it appears to be incapable of this construction, *e. g.* (Luke, ii. 30; iii. 6; xix. 9; John, iv. 22; Acts, iv. 12; xiii. 26, 47; xxviii. 28; Rom. x. 10; xi. 11; 2 Cor. i. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Eph. i. 13; Tit. ii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 15; Jude 3, &c.) In these, and in some others, it appears to refer, if not exclusively, at least in part, to some circumstances connected with salvation in the present life. Of the entire number of examples of the word salvation, very few more than six are evident and exclusive allusions to life eternal. And there are several of which there is strong reason for believing, if we examine the passages where they occur by themselves, that they signify the condition of acceptance or salvation in this mortal state. One example of this kind is Heb. vi. 9. The Apostle assures his Hebrew disciples that he was persuaded better things of them than unbelief, and things which *accompany* salvation. If “*accompany*” were not considered to exceed the force of the original, it would be at once decisive of the question. It is not, however, too much to affirm that St. Paul certainly conveys to us the idea of proximity to salvation, and it is beyond dispute certain, as will be almost immediately evidenced by Scriptural testimony, that

believers are *saved, in this life*, by faith. Now, an argument which, together with the knowledge of this fact, seems quite sufficient to establish the truth of our interpretation is, that the Hebrews, to whom St. Paul wrote, were evidently wavering in their faith, and that it appears to impute a very reasonable intention to his words, to suppose them to signify agreeably to their very natural signification, that those persons were not far removed from the faith which *accompanies* salvation.—A similar interpretation may be assigned to 1 Pet. i. 9, 10. The disciples of the Apostle are said to be actually receiving the salvation of their souls. The translation appears not here to admit of any reasonable dispute. It follows as a matter of direct consequence, that the salvation which they were receiving, was coincident with their own natural lives. I think it might be shown without much difficulty, but not in that space which I am willing to afford to the inquiry, that the same signification is, at least, included in Rom. i. 16, 17; x. 10; Luke i. 69; Phil. i. 28; Phil. ii. 12; Luke, xix. 9; 2 Cor. vii. 10; 2 Tim. iii. 15. Compare also Tit. iii. 3—5; 2 Tim. i. 9. It is also observable that in two of the passages, where eternal salvation is so evidently signified as to admit of no question, there are adjuncts employed—by which it appears that the word without them

might be capable of another interpretation. It is further worthy of notice, that where the Apostle has, with least appearance of ambiguity, alluded to the purpose of God and of man in this state of probation; with respect to eternal salvation he, several times, if not always, expresses it as *the acquisition* of that felicity. (1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. x. 39.) If the word translated salvation, in 1 Thess. v. 9, does not mean everlasting salvation, but salvation in the present life, the passage is of course more in our favour.—But that salvation is a state of reconciliation to God which commences in this world is reduced *to a certainty*, by a few passages where the idea of being *saved* is *most unequivocally* expressed with reference to the present life.—One passage of this kind is Acts, ii. 47, where it is written in the Greek, that God added to the Church “*such as were saved, or were in a state of salvation.*” Similar passages are the following:—(1 Cor. i. 18; xv. 2: 2 Cor. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 5, 8; 2 Tim. i. 9; Luke, vii. 50; 1 Pet. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 24; Tit. iii. 5). There cannot exist a shadow of doubt that the salvation there alluded to refers to the present state of existence.—It is likewise, I believe, *unanswerably* true, that the Scriptures also, under a variety of phrase, reveal to us the salvation of the believer in his probation—(See my *Course of Christian*

Obedience). On all these grounds, therefore, there is ample authority for the assertion that it is perfectly consistent with the sacred oracles of the Christian, to ascribe salvation to the believer—to that state into which men are brought (as in 2 Thess. ii. 13), through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.

So that, on the whole, it may be safely affirmed that we are at liberty in cases which are doubtful in themselves to interpret salvation by a condition of the soul previous to its departure from the body ; and that we ought so to interpret it if there appear any cogent reasons for such a conclusion. Such reasons have already been adduced in the pages immediately preceding with respect to the state of election ; as in five passages out of the seven, where the nature of election is described as to its reference to the temporal or eternal state, it is most unquestionably referred to the former ; and more or less probably in the remainder.

It will be a corroboration of our view of Election as referring to the present life, if we can show, as will be seen hereafter, that the elect do not necessarily persevere to the end in a state of grace.

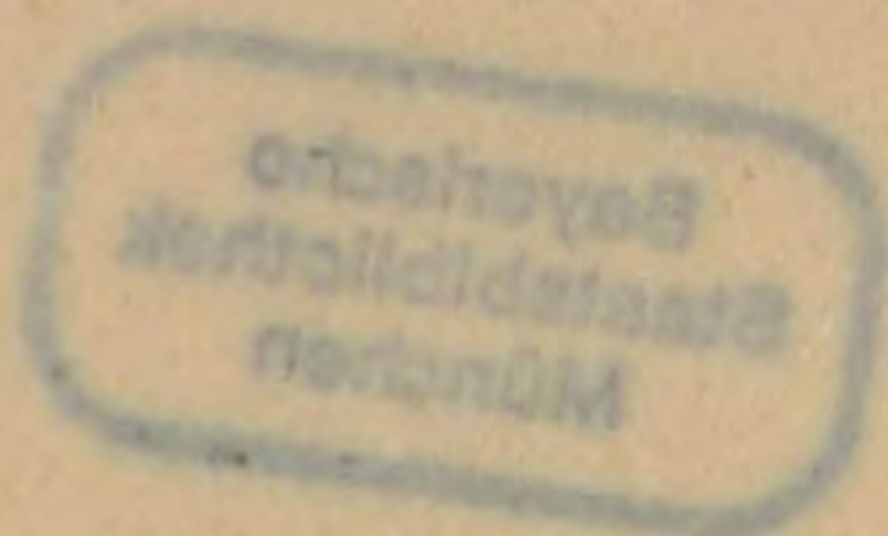
There now remain but two passages expressly

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relating to election, which it is necessary for me to cite in the branch of the subject we are now considering. They do not, in themselves, convey any definite idea of election, and may, therefore, be referred to that description which the Scriptures appear elsewhere to afford—to that, indeed, which we have already partially advanced. The passages are Rom. xi. 5 and 28, which concern the election of the seven thousand whom God had reserved to himself, and whom we believe to have been elected from the context, as I have previously remarked, and from other portions of the New Testament to a present state of salvation.

Thus have we, I believe, gone through the examination of all but four (Luke, x. 42 ; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28 ; Rev. xvii. 14) of the passages contained in my limits which expressly refer to any kind of election—and it appears that they fall very far short of the assertion of the doctrine that God chooses men without any regard to their condition or circumstances, or to an infallible certainty of everlasting salvation. At the same time, it must be admitted, that if it be true that persons who are once elected into a state of salvation must always continue therein or cannot finally fall away—then, of course, a temporary election comes to the same thing as being elected to a certainty of everlasting



salvation. Whether this be agreeable to fact will be the subject of inquiry in the succeeding section.

Now, the first of the four remaining passages which I adduce is Rev. xvii. 14. This text is certainly not of much service in elucidating the nature of election, and might, perhaps, with great propriety have been arranged in the non-descriptive class of our Scriptural extracts. It rather favours our views of election than otherwise. I think the addition of the idea of continued faithfulness to that of election shows that the one does not succeed the other as a necessary consequence. There is a gradation, a climax, in the three terms employed. The continuance in the faith appears to be added as something more important than the election, which could hardly have been the case if election were necessarily a predestination to certain salvation.

This application of the passage to the subject of the present section, is certainly not superior to cavil. It may be said that the words signify that the persons spoken of were called and chosen, and *of course* faithful. But I would first deny the right, from the passage, to supply the words *of course*, or any of similar import, before *faithful*, and not to prefix the same words to *chosen*. Is there not as much reason in the passage for doing

one as the other? Why, from the passage itself, should there appear any necessary connexion between any two of the terms? and if it is certain there is no such connexion between two of the terms in succession, why should not the same independence be conceived to exist between the other two, which are joined by the copulative? Now, we know that election does not by any means follow the *call* as a matter of necessity, for “many are called but few chosen;” as, therefore, the second term does not necessarily follow the first, we have grounds in the passage for thinking rather than the contrary that the third is not, of necessity, consequent on the second. But the supply of words, significant of a direct consequence, rather concerns the question of final perseverance which comes for consideration in the next section. If final perseverance is a true doctrine, it would be allowable to make faithfulness necessarily succeed election. But if it is contrary to Scripture, as I trust it will appear to be, then Rev. xvii. 14, describes those who were better than others in obeying rather than rejecting the call of God, and were chosen, and, when chosen, did not fall away as some did and as they might have done, but continued faithful to the end.

The availableness, therefore, of the passage to the subject of this section, noticed at the com-

mencement of our remarks upon it, is, I trust, above all reasonable contradiction.

The few observations which will follow on the rest of the passages, may show the fallacy of the Calvinistic doctrine in some of its details.

In one of those excluded passages, the election is mentioned, not as an act of God, but *of man*, and *the object of that election can not reasonably be believed to be distinct from the means and method of salvation*—(See Luke x. 41, 42), where Martha is informed that there is but one thing needful, and that Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word, had chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her. So that, it would appear that the election is at least in part compounded of human action, empowered, no doubt, by the grace and ability which God giveth.

The other two passages, as yet unnoticed, I reserved till I had arrived at this place, because they do not describe the nature of election to salvation—and because they are two out of several, which not only show what must be believed, that the acts of the Almighty proceed, if we may so speak, from the best of motives and for the best of purposes, but also materially aid the proof that the design of the divine mind, as we argued in chap. II., is agreeable to the dictates of reason. The passages I allude to are 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, by which

it appears that God selected weak human instruments for the execution of his plans, in order, most probably, to show that the success was attributable solely to Himself. This passage might, indeed, be sufficient to check the presumption of those who contend that God selects men even for salvation irrespectively of their qualifications, merely because it is his pleasure ; that pleasure arising from causes which are not perfectly reasonable. But there are more appropriate arguments in disproof of the doctrine of irrespectively election, or at least irrespectively grace. St. Paul actually informs us, almost as plainly as words can make the truth, that he obtained the mercy, probably, of conversion from God, *because* he committed his sins ignorantly and in unbelief, (1 Tim. i. 13), and was enabled by God to assume the ministry of the word, *for that* he accounted him faithful ⁽¹⁾. (1 Tim. i. 12.) These are convincing proofs that God did not bestow grace upon him or the Apostleship, without regard to any part of his life or character. Again, our Saviour prayed (Luke, xxiii. 34), that God would forgive his murderers, *because* they did not know what they did. If God accepted men without respect to any thing in their lives, how could Christ pray his Heavenly Father to regard *their ignorance* as a reason for his accepting them? Abraham again was

chosen on a particular purpose by God, because he knew him that he would command his children after him. (Gen. xviii. 19.) Now, if there were only these few cases on record to show that God does regard points in men's characters and circumstances when he confers his favours upon them, and when we have no texts to declare that God does ever select or elect men without reference to any element in their composition, why should we believe that he ever does deal with men in this manner; on the contrary, how is it possible not to believe the direct reverse of this opinion, since all that is revealed is plainly opposed to it?

It appears, then, we trust, at present, that election of individuals is not revealed as being to a certainty of eternal life, unless final perseverance is inevitable—that election is probably a joint act of God and of man—and that, thirdly, God does not elect without such motives as appear to us to be perfectly just and reasonable, agreeably to the arguments which we adduced in chap. II.

PART VI.

The uncertainty of final perseverance.

THERE are several elements of fatalism necessary to the formation of a complete system of Calvinistic doctrines. The election of the favourites of Heaven must be made without the slightest exertion of their volition or agency—without the operation of any other cause than the absolute undefinable will of the Almighty, and without the slightest possibility of any termination of their lives in a state of alienation from Him. On the two former topics we have already made a few observations, and one of them in particular will call for a very lengthened discussion in a subsequent chapter. This appears the proper place for the consideration of the doctrine of perseverance. It will be sufficient to disprove the absolute nature of election, if we can establish the precariousness of its continuance to the term of our natural existence.

The course which I intend to pursue in this branch of my subject will be to show—that the principal arguments in favour of the Calvinistic theory convey no intimation whatever that the final

perseverance of the saint is a fact of constant occurrence, and to conclude the inquiry with the evidences of the fallacy of this part of the system to which I am opposed.

It is giving our antagonists the greatest possible apparent advantage, in attacking their strongholds before we have taken any direct steps for establishing the correctness of our own views of the subject. But I hesitate not to avow my firm conviction that none of the texts advanced against us can be regarded, by fair interpretation, as a revelation of the universal certainty of perseverance, independently of the most direct testimony to the contrary, and that some of the supports proposed for the creed in dispute, present scarcely the appearance of foundation.

It is certainly under the fullest assurance that the Calvinistic tenet of final perseverance is contrary to other parts of Scripture, that I commence my criticism of the alleged evidences of its opposite doctrine. But though I am impelled by the strongest reasons for disputing the accuracy of the interpretation to which I am opposed, yet I trust the method of investigation which I adopt is one that is extremely obvious, and would force itself upon the notice without the slightest extrinsic necessity.

The principal grounds on which the Calvinist

seems to build his theory of final perseverance, are the following texts of Scripture:—

- (1.) (John x. 27—30.) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave me them is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” (2.) (John iv. 14.) “He that drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (3.) (John vi. 51, 58.) “He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever,” which according to Mr. Scott is explained by (4, 5.) (John vi. 35, 47.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (6.) (John v. 24.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death *unto life*.” (7.) (John vi. 37—40.) “This is the Father’s will who hath sent me, that of all whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will

of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (8.) (John xiv. 16—19.) "I will give you another comforter who shall abide with you for ever. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you. Because I live, ye shall live also." (9.) (Rom. v. 10.) "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (10.) (Rom. viii. 1, 34.) "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God—who also maketh intercession for us." (11.) (Col. iii. 3, 4.) "Your life is hid with Christ in God—when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (12.) (Rom. viii. 29.) "Whom he justified or justifies, them he glorified or glorifies." (13.) (1. Cor. i. 8, 9.) "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (14.) (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." (15.) (2. Thess. iii. 3.) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." (16.) (1 Pet. i. 3, 5.) "Of his abundant mercy he hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." To which may be added (17.) (Eph. i. 13, 14.—iv. 30.) "Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise who is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession—sealed unto the day of redemption." (18.) (2 Tim. ii. 19.) "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth Christ depart from iniquity." (19.) (Matt. xxiv. 24.) "If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect." (20.) (1 Thess. v. 9.) "God hath not appointed you to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (21.) (2 Thess. ii. 14.) "He hath called you by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (22.) (Luke xxii. 32.) "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." In this series of quotations, which I have numbered for the sake of reference,

I have endeavoured to collect the main strength of the Calvinistic arguments. They appear to give such satisfaction to the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*, that he reflects on that which I have placed at the head of the list, on which he lays the greatest emphasis, in the following terms :—"What are we to suppose these energetical words to mean, if, after all, they who really do follow Christ, of whom exclusively he speaks, should be so tempted and overcome as finally and eternally to perish? Would an act of grace or deed of gift, worded in such precise, absolute, and unqualified language, admit of being explained away by limitations and exceptions not so much as intimated in it? Would the parties concerned think the trustees or administrators of such a grant or deed dealt fairly with them, if they thus excluded them from the benefit of it." Pp. 679, 680.

Now, in making this the starting point of our investigation, I must frankly acknowledge that I am constrained to pronounce this passage more worthy of the pulpit of a declamatory enthusiast than of the chair of a divine who has bestowed attention on biblical literature. The author speaks, as if he considered that the Scriptures were, in every individual part, very clear and explicit, and complete upon the subject of the doctrines of which it treats,

and that they are written throughout with all the precision of the best legal or literary compositions. Whereas, nothing can be better ascertained that not only this is not agreeable to fact, but almost the reverse of truth. It could not be unknown to such a commentator as Mr. Scott, that the whole of a doctrine is frequently not delivered in one particular passage or one connected series of passages of Scripture ; that much may be understood or supplied, from Scripture, in various individual portions of the contents of the Bible, in order to define their true significations ; that the Scripture is therefore not to be interpreted like a regularly written work of human genius, which generally aims, in every division of its subject, at the greatest perspicuity ; and that the interpretation of single passages of Scripture by themselves has been productive of some of the most enormous errors of theology. None acquainted with biblical criticism will deny that comparisons of various parts of the sacred volume are necessary to show under what limitations, or with what allowances, general and concise expressions are to be received, and are thus often requisite for the acquirement of a correct view of a single sentence ; and that the principle on which Mr. Scott appears to have interpreted the text particularly alluded to, is not to be admitted ; that a passage may be understood in its

apparent sense, considered by itself, merely because it is, if considered by itself, apparently clear and intelligible.

Cases to prove the point immediately at issue might be produced in great numbers; as for example—the text: “Ask and ye shall receive.” It is impossible from these words, separately considered, to learn either the person to whom the petitions are to be preferred, the particular objects for which they are made, or the time and manner in which they are to be performed. These subjects in almost all their main particulars must be sought from other pages of the Bible. But I shall confine myself to those examples which are most appropriate to our present question. It is then very remarkable, that in numerous passages of Scripture, the work of salvation, either whole or in part, is spoken of almost or quite without any intimation of the operations or the influence of the Spirit.

The following catalogue of such places, by no means inconsiderable, might be much enlarged, St. Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 14, 15; Acts xx. 21; Acts xxvi. 20; St. Matt. v. vi. vii. *passim*. xi. 28-30, xiii. 23, xvi. 24—27, xviii. 1—9, xix. 16—22; Luke viii. 15; Col. iii.; 1 Thess. iv. and v.; Philipp. i. 27; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16; James i. 22; 1 John iii. 3; v. 18; Jude, 20, 21.

It might be affirmed, from these and such like passages, considered separately from others, that portions of the work of salvation, if not the entire work itself, were the effect solely of human exertion. Whereas it is well known, that man is unable of himself to do anything that is good in the sight of God. The Scripture constantly describes obedience to the will of God, as, in some sort, the joint operation of God and man. This fact is evidenced by the passages which allude separately to the works of both, and by such texts as the following:—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do" (Phil. ii. 13); "Without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5); also (1 John v. 18) "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." I attempt not now to define in the smallest degree the nature of this co-operation. I assert only that it is in terms, so described in the Gospel, and that, without God's grace, man is incapable of spiritual enterprise.

But this information is obtained from other passages of Scripture, than those which describe the acts of man, as if they were independently his own; and which must therefore not be interpreted by themselves, and are a sufficient evidence of the fact that that principle on which Mr. Scott appears

to have understood the text (John x. 27—30), is unsound and indefensible.

Now it may be observed *of the first fifteen* of the preceding texts alleged by the Calvinist, in defence of his doctrine of final perseverance, that they cannot possibly afford him their support, unless they are intended to speak absolutely of the preservation of the saint by the divine power in the way of salvation to the very last, without that preservation being any way dependent on any part of man's character or conduct.

It is not, however, positively stated nor even intimated in any of those passages, that it is so unconnected with the human recipient. If it can be shown that the preserving grace of God does not in any degree or manner depend on the will, or the sentiments, or the works of man, the proof must be sought from other Scriptural sources; on the principle that we may compare one text of Scripture with another, in order to arrive at its true signification. — And could we discover a single sentence in the Book of Revelation, which declares, in a way which cannot be misunderstood, that whenever the acts of divine grace, and particularly that of preserving the believer from eventual apostasy, are mentioned, it is always signified that they have no dependence upon the previous condition of the human soul, it would supply

a very satisfactory evidence of the fallacy of our own opinion. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the Gospel. We are not debarred, therefore, from comparing the texts adduced on the side of our opponents by any inspired declaration of this description. We are at liberty, in fact, to consult other portions of Holy Writ, and we will avail ourselves of the privilege.—And it may be remarked, in the first place, that, as the compliance of man with the divine will, in working out his salvation, is never to be understood without allusion to the grace of God—it is, by parity of reasoning, to be inferred that the texts which express exclusively the influence of grace on the human recipient, in the same work, are not to be understood without some reference to his spiritual condition. It certainly cannot be denied that they *may be* so understood, and that therefore, only on this ground, there is no necessity for taking the passages in an absolute sense; or, in other words, they do not prove the Calvinistic perseverance.—But we can easily proceed beyond the mere negation of the competency of these passages to the purpose for which they are adduced, or even the reasonableness of their referring to some antecedent or co-existent traits in the human character, by the argument just drawn from the texts which speak solely of the obedience of man. There are not a few

passages of Scripture, which actually describe the operations of God's grace, on his rational creatures, as in some sense connected with, or even dependent upon, their demeanour; for instance, James iv. 6—8, 10; Phil. iv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. v. 6; Matt. v. 6, vii. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 12; and, in a word, one of the greatest of blessings, justification, is represented in Scripture as dependent on a certain antecedent faith which is necessary to its reception; not to mention that a continuance in a state of acceptance is inseparable from the same vital principle of action. It is beyond all contradiction evident, that the bestowal of the grace of God is represented as contingent on some sentiments, emotions, or conduct in man.—They supply, therefore, an additional reason to the last, and even a stronger argument for the assertion, that the declarations of the divine decrees—and the promises of triumph to the conflicts of the saint, contained in the fifteen texts under consideration, may imply the same contingency—and therefore are by no means proofs of the Calvinistic doctrine. But farther, as it is nowhere declared in Scripture that these acts of the grace of God, justification, sanctification, and preservation in a state of acceptance, are ever bestowed on his rational creatures, without there being at least some antecedent or concomitant disposition of mind or spirit for their

reception, and that disposition is several times revealed as preceding, or accompanying them, it is probable that it does in all cases though not expressly mentioned in every instance, for this simple reason, as far as we have proceeded at present—because we have no authority from Scripture for denying this representation to be true—and because all the positive information is in its favour; and we cannot but believe the similar contingencies to be general when the revelation of such contingencies is made without limitation or restriction.

We cannot argue from the silence of Scripture, in some parts against its positive direct instruction in others, but must rather borrow light from its fullest revelations to the explanation of its silence. This conclusion is converted almost into absolute certainty with respect to perseverance, by the consideration that the commencement and continuance of a state of salvation is constantly described in Scripture as being inseparably connected with a lively faith in Christ, (1 Pet. i. 3—5; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xv. 13); that it is impossible that a man who renounces the faith can be one who perseveres—and by the fact that it is expressly revealed that faith is a mean by which the saints are preserved by God for everlasting glory, as it is written in one of the passages already quoted (No. 16), “kept through

faith unto salvation" (1. Pet. i. 5,) to which may be added, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) It is impossible to deny from only these two passages, that, as far as we are informed, the being kept in heart and mind by the peace of God, and the being kept in perseverance, are both of them performed by God through the means of the faith and the prayers of his people—and, of course, we can judge only by our information.

Now this argument may be confirmed by the examination of some of the fifteen passages themselves; several of them appear to indicate the same truth. For example, that which is regarded as the most valuable evidence of the doctrine of final perseverance by the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*,—"My sheep hear my voice," &c., &c. It can require no proof that the sheep of Christ who follow Him can be only believers in Him. And it is very deserving of remark that Christ does not say that believers shall always hear his voice, and shall continue to believe in Him. His words go no farther in this respect than the implication that the persons who deserve to be entitled his sheep, do hear and obey his word. And there can be no doubt—if we assume that eternal life

here signifies the rewards of heaven—that Christ gives these rewards only on the supposition that the sheep continue believers in him to the last period of their existence.

Similar observations may be made on John iv. 14, and John vi. 35. It is reasonable to understand our Saviour in these sentences to have signified that a man who truly believes in Him, has, so long as he believes, a constant source of comfort within him from which the desires of his soul may be satisfied, (See also Romans xv. 13.) It is perfectly certain that it must be by faith that the blessings intimated are conferred on man, on the general principle that without faith the soul cannot be in a state of grace. If any proof were wanting that the believer is the only person of whom our Saviour speaks, it is supplied even by the context (John vii. 38,) and our Saviour must signify that the believer would never thirst so long as he continued in the faith.

The same reflections apply to John vi. 37—40, 47, 51, 58.

The majority of texts advanced by our opponents are perfectly capable of the same interpretation. For instance—"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19); "Much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10); "Then shall ye also appear with him in

glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4.) All these and such like expressions must imply the assumption that they do not abandon the faith of the Gospel, and even Rom. viii. 29, 30, may be placed in the same category. In verse 28, the blessings are restricted to those who love God.

It appears, therefore, from a variety of considerations, that perseverance involves a lively faith, and that till it can be shown that final apostasy from the faith is an impossibility, the promises of God to keep the believer unto the end may signify that he will do so on the supposition or the condition that he will at least labour to continue in the faith. There is nothing to affect this conclusion, in the texts marked 17 and 18—no abstract impossibility that the earnest and the seal will not be withdrawn, if the persons to whom they are vouchsafed violate any conditions on which those tokens were bestowed. The earnest in (17) may signify as to infallibility only the sign of ratification of a contract between two parties, one of whom may at some future time dissolve the agreement if he renounces the faith; and the seal, in (18) may be simply on the part of God, a mark of election to the day of redemption, unless the elected on theirs remove it by their apostasy. This view of the passages will be much supported, supposing it is taught in Scripture, as will appear

on further inquiry to be the fact, that the elect will be saved, if they do not apostatise—for there is no unreasonableness in supplying this hypothesis in all similar cases where it is omitted; and it will be still further confirmed and established as indisputably certain, if it could be made to appear that the perseverance of the elect is not in all instances a necessary consequence.

Of (19) it is sufficient to remark that Whitby has proved that it cannot be understood to signify the certain impossibility of even the deception of the elect; much less of the final fall from election; of (20) and (21) that they expressly do not apply to the purpose; of (22) that it is a prayer on a particular occasion.

And, in a word, with regard to all the preceding arguments, it may be safely affirmed, that, however possible or otherwise it may be for the believer to relapse finally into infidelity, the question of final perseverance may be fairly considered as coincident with this—whether such a relapse is possible.—And if it can be shown that this is the case, it will at once appear, not that the passages hitherto advanced in favour of the Calvinistic tenet *may* be received with certain restrictions, but *must* of necessity be so understood, and that the final perseverance of Calvinism has no foundation in truth.

Proceed we now to those texts and arguments which show the necessity of qualifying and modifying the preceding passages—and which disprove the Calvinistic theory.

Now, the first argument which I shall adduce in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine, is one which is included in the list of texts cited by the Calvinist in its favour. It is derived from that passage of St. Paul to the Philippians, where he describes himself as “being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ.” (Phil. i. 6.)

I observe, in the first place, the Apostle expresses only his confidence or persuasion that the work would be continued to the day of Christ. Now, if the Apostle had known that it was an invariable law of God’s dispensations that incipient faith should never entirely cease but always terminate in a state of acceptance, it is impossible in any reasonable manner to account for the Apostle’s affirming that as a matter of belief or trust in the case of the Philippians who had had fellowship in the Gospel, when he must have been certain of it as a point of fact. If he had known that the Philippians must persevere to the end because God ordained that all who were once created anew in Christ Jesus would infallibly continue in a

state of salvation to the conclusion of their earthly career, is it to be imagined that he could only have said that he *trusted* in their final perseverance? His only trusting in the completion of the work alluded to, shows that there was something in the case which fell short of absolute certainty; and, indeed, according to the most reasonable mode of interpretation, he derives his confidence from the circumstance mentioned in verse 5—their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. He is thankful to God for their adherence to the faith from their first hearing of the Gospel to the date of his Epistle; as he is confident that God will keep them through faith till death shall put a period to their probationary state. The circumstance which makes him thankful and joyful for their constant fellowship in the Gospel from first to last is the confidence which he receives from it, that the work will, by God's grace, be continued to the termination of their course. This is the only grammatical interpretation of the passage apart from all considerations of the doctrine in dispute—considerations which, of course, ought to be excluded in order to that impartiality which is necessary to an unbiassed judgment. The passage is, in fact, perfectly open to the same subaudition which we have contended for in the quotations preceding, that God would

complete the work of faith in the souls of the Philippians if they continued to use the means of grace. And the meaning therefore of the passage agreeably to the preceding remarks, will be that the Apostle has confidence from the previous fidelity of the Philippians that they will persevere in the use of those means, and that therefore God would enable them to finish their course with joy. And at all events, the expression of mere confidence in the perseverance of the Philippians and the ground of their former fidelity, on which that confidence is based, are evidences that the Apostle did not know of that argument which would have been supplied by the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance, had it been agreeable to the truth, and which would have rendered all others superfluous and nugatory. In a word, as the Apostle knew not the doctrine of the Calvinist, it is not the doctrine of inspiration, and is undeserving of our belief.

But I turn to arguments more direct and positive; and first to some of those derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews. And here I cannot fail to remark, that it must be allowed by all persons who have inquired in a proper manner into the purport of that Epistle, that its main design is to dissuade the Hebrew Christians from a relapse into infidelity. It would not consist with the concise-

ness which I propose to myself to prove this point; I think it is already sufficiently established. I have no doubt in the world that it is capable of as a rigid demonstration as almost any truth of revelation. Now then, as this is an object of the Epistle, one doctrine is necessarily signified, which is denied by the advocates of final perseverance, that it is possible for those who have been once under the influence of grace to return to a state in which nature is predominant.

This, however, does not prove but that they would again recover their lost condition. But from the Epistle itself, if we descend to one or two of its parts, we shall see the divine authority for denying its probability, and even doubting whether it be so much as possible; for instance, (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.) “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, &c., &c.” A short sentence can scarcely describe in more significant expressions the state of new creatures of Christ than a portion of the one preceding. It is quite certain that such men as these must have been elected to a state of salvation in this life according to what we have seen

election is represented to be in the New Testament. But these disciples may fall away because the inspired Apostle admits the supposition of their apostatising—a supposition which he could not have admitted if he had known such apostasy to be impossible. But this is not all. He adds that if these elect persons do fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. How then can it be imagined that no man who has been converted to the faith can fall away, and be finally drowned in perdition. Supposing that the Apostle does not really signify that it is utterly impracticable, to reconvert any one apostate of that description, surely it must be contrary to all rational interpretation to believe that this passage of St. Paul is compatible with the doctrine that it is quite impossible for the convert to renounce the faith, and if he does renounce it, quite impossible that he should *not* be restored to a state of repentance.

The Apostle is not sparing of this doctrine. In the same epistle (chap. x. 26—29), he writes:—“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of

it appears that God selected weak human instruments for the execution of his plans, in order, most probably, to show that the success was attributable solely to Himself. This passage might, indeed, be sufficient to check the presumption of those who contend that God selects men even for salvation irrespectively of their qualifications, merely because it is his pleasure; that pleasure arising from causes which are not perfectly reasonable. But there are more appropriate arguments in disproof of the doctrine of irrespective election, or at least irrespective grace. St. Paul actually informs us, almost as plainly as words can make the truth, that he obtained the mercy, probably, of conversion from God, *because* he committed his sins ignorantly and in unbelief, (1 Tim. i. 13), and was enabled by God to assume the ministry of the word, *for that* he accounted him faithful ⁽¹⁾. (1 Tim. i. 12.) These are convincing proofs that God did not bestow grace upon him or the Apostleship, without regard to any part of his life or character. Again, our Saviour prayed (Luke, xxiii. 34), that God would forgive his murderers, *because* they did not know what they did. If God accepted men without respect to any thing in their lives, how could Christ pray his Heavenly Father to regard *their ignorance* as a reason for his accepting them? Abraham again was

chosen on a particular purpose by God, because he knew him that he would command his children after him. (Gen. xviii. 19.) Now, if there were only these few cases on record to show that God does regard points in men's characters and circumstances when he confers his favours upon them, and when we have no texts to declare that God does ever select or elect men without reference to any element in their composition, why should we believe that he ever does deal with men in this manner; on the contrary, how is it possible not to believe the direct reverse of this opinion, since all that is revealed is plainly opposed to it?

It appears, then, we trust, at present, that election of individuals is not revealed as being to a certainty of eternal life, unless final perseverance is inevitable—that election is probably a joint act of God and of man—and that, thirdly, God does not elect without such motives as appear to us to be perfectly just and reasonable, agreeably to the arguments which we adduced in chap. II.

PART VI.

The uncertainty of final perseverance.

THERE are several elements of fatalism necessary to the formation of a complete system of Calvinistic doctrines. The election of the favourites of Heaven must be made without the slightest exertion of their volition or agency—without the operation of any other cause than the absolute undefinable will of the Almighty, and without the slightest possibility of any termination of their lives in a state of alienation from Him. On the two former topics we have already made a few observations, and one of them in particular will call for a very lengthened discussion in a subsequent chapter. This appears the proper place for the consideration of the doctrine of perseverance. It will be sufficient to disprove the absolute nature of election, if we can establish the precariousness of its continuance to the term of our natural existence.

The course which I intend to pursue in this branch of my subject will be to show—that the principal arguments in favour of the Calvinistic theory convey no intimation whatever that the final

perseverance of the saint is a fact of constant occurrence, and to conclude the inquiry with the evidences of the fallacy of this part of the system to which I am opposed.

It is giving our antagonists the greatest possible apparent advantage, in attacking their strongholds before we have taken any direct steps for establishing the correctness of our own views of the subject. But I hesitate not to avow my firm conviction that none of the texts advanced against us can be regarded, by fair interpretation, as a revelation of the universal certainty of perseverance, independently of the most direct testimony to the contrary, and that some of the supports proposed for the creed in dispute, present scarcely the appearance of foundation.

It is certainly under the fullest assurance that the Calvinistic tenet of final perseverance is contrary to other parts of Scripture, that I commence my criticism of the alleged evidences of its opposite doctrine. But though I am impelled by the strongest reasons for disputing the accuracy of the interpretation to which I am opposed, yet I trust the method of investigation which I adopt is one that is extremely obvious, and would force itself upon the notice without the slightest extrinsic necessity.

The principal grounds on which the Calvinist

seems to build his theory of final perseverance, are the following texts of Scripture:—

- (1.) (John x. 27—30.) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave me them is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” (2.) (John iv. 14.) “He that drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (3.) (John vi. 51, 58.) “He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever,” which according to Mr. Scott is explained by (4, 5.) (John vi. 35, 47.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (6.) (John v. 24.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death *unto life*.” (7.) (John vi. 37—40.) “This is the Father’s will who hath sent me, that of all whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will

of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (8.) (John xiv. 16—19.) "I will give you another comforter who shall abide with you for ever. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you. Because I live, ye shall live also." (9.) (Rom. v. 10.) "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (10.) (Rom. viii. 1, 34.) "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God—who also maketh intercession for us." (11.) (Col. iii. 3, 4.) "Your life is hid with Christ in God—when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (12.) (Rom. viii. 29.) "Whom he justified or justifies, them he glorified or glorifies." (13.) (1. Cor. i. 8, 9.) "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (14.) (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." (15.) (2. Thess. iii. 3.) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." (16.) (1 Pet. i. 3, 5.) "Of his abundant mercy he hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." To which may be added (17.) (Eph. i. 13, 14.—iv. 30.) "Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise who is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession—sealed unto the day of redemption." (18.) (2 Tim. ii. 19.) "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth Christ depart from iniquity." (19.) (Matt. xxiv. 24.) "If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect." (20.) (1 Thess. v. 9.) "God hath not appointed you to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (21.) (2 Thess. ii. 14.) "He hath called you by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (22.) (Luke xxii. 32.) "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." In this series of quotations, which I have numbered for the sake of reference,

I have endeavoured to collect the main strength of the Calvinistic arguments. They appear to give such satisfaction to the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*, that he reflects on that which I have placed at the head of the list, on which he lays the greatest emphasis, in the following terms :—"What are we to suppose these energetical words to mean, if, after all, they who really do follow Christ, of whom exclusively he speaks, should be so tempted and overcome as finally and eternally to perish? Would an act of grace or deed of gift, worded in such precise, absolute, and unqualified language, admit of being explained away by limitations and exceptions not so much as intimated in it? Would the parties concerned think the trustees or administrators of such a grant or deed dealt fairly with them, if they thus excluded them from the benefit of it." Pp. 679, 680.

Now, in making this the starting point of our investigation, I must frankly acknowledge that I am constrained to pronounce this passage more worthy of the pulpit of a declamatory enthusiast than of the chair of a divine who has bestowed attention on biblical literature. The author speaks, as if he considered that the Scriptures were, in every individual part, very clear and explicit, and complete upon the subject of the doctrines of which it treats,

and that they are written throughout with all the precision of the best legal or literary compositions. Whereas, nothing can be better ascertained that not only this is not agreeable to fact, but almost the reverse of truth. It could not be unknown to such a commentator as Mr. Scott, that the whole of a doctrine is frequently not delivered in one particular passage or one connected series of passages of Scripture ; that much may be understood or supplied, from Scripture, in various individual portions of the contents of the Bible, in order to define their true significations ; that the Scripture is therefore not to be interpreted like a regularly written work of human genius, which generally aims, in every division of its subject, at the greatest perspicuity ; and that the interpretation of single passages of Scripture by themselves has been productive of some of the most enormous errors of theology. None acquainted with biblical criticism will deny that comparisons of various parts of the sacred volume are necessary to show under what limitations, or with what allowances, general and concise expressions are to be received, and are thus often requisite for the acquirement of a correct view of a single sentence ; and that the principle on which Mr. Scott appears to have interpreted the text particularly alluded to, is not to be admitted ; that a passage may be understood in its

apparent sense, considered by itself, merely because it is, if considered by itself, apparently clear and intelligible.

Cases to prove the point immediately at issue might be produced in great numbers; as for example—the text: “Ask and ye shall receive.” It is impossible from these words, separately considered, to learn either the person to whom the petitions are to be preferred, the particular objects for which they are made, or the time and manner in which they are to be performed. These subjects in almost all their main particulars must be sought from other pages of the Bible. But I shall confine myself to those examples which are most appropriate to our present question. It is then very remarkable, that in numerous passages of Scripture, the work of salvation, either whole or in part, is spoken of almost or quite without any intimation of the operations or the influence of the Spirit.

The following catalogue of such places, by no means inconsiderable, might be much enlarged, St. Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 14, 15; Acts xx. 21; Acts xxvi. 20; St. Matt. v. vi. vii. *passim*. xi. 28-30, xiii. 23, xvi. 24—27, xviii. 1—9, xix. 16—22; Luke viii. 15; Col. iii.; 1 Thess. iv. and v.; Philipp. i. 27; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16; James i. 22; 1 John iii. 3; v. 18; Jude, 20, 21.

It might be affirmed, from these and such like passages, considered separately from others, that portions of the work of salvation, if not the entire work itself, were the effect solely of human exertion. Whereas it is well known, that man is unable of himself to do anything that is good in the sight of God. The Scripture constantly describes obedience to the will of God, as, in some sort, the joint operation of God and man. This fact is evidenced by the passages which allude separately to the works of both, and by such texts as the following:—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do" (Phil. ii. 13); "Without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5); also (1 John v. 18) "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." I attempt not now to define in the smallest degree the nature of this co-operation. I assert only that it is in terms, so described in the Gospel, and that, without God's grace, man is incapable of spiritual enterprise.

But this information is obtained from other passages of Scripture, than those which describe the acts of man, as if they were independently his own; and which must therefore not be interpreted by themselves, and are a sufficient evidence of the fact that that principle on which Mr. Scott appears

to have understood the text (John x. 27—30), is unsound and indefensible.

Now it may be observed *of the first fifteen* of the preceding texts alleged by the Calvinist, in defence of his doctrine of final perseverance, that they cannot possibly afford him their support, unless they are intended to speak absolutely of the preservation of the saint by the divine power in the way of salvation to the very last, without that preservation being any way dependent on any part of man's character or conduct.

It is not, however, positively stated nor even intimated in any of those passages, that it is so unconnected with the human recipient. If it can be shown that the preserving grace of God does not in any degree or manner depend on the will, or the sentiments, or the works of man, the proof must be sought from other Scriptural sources; on the principle that we may compare one text of Scripture with another, in order to arrive at its true signification. — And could we discover a single sentence in the Book of Revelation, which declares, in a way which cannot be misunderstood, that whenever the acts of divine grace, and particularly that of preserving the believer from eventual apostasy, are mentioned, it is always signified that they have no dependence upon the previous condition of the human soul, it would supply

a very satisfactory evidence of the fallacy of our own opinion. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the Gospel. We are not debarred, therefore, from comparing the texts adduced on the side of our opponents by any inspired declaration of this description. We are at liberty, in fact, to consult other portions of Holy Writ, and we will avail ourselves of the privilege.—And it may be remarked, in the first place, that, as the compliance of man with the divine will, in working out his salvation, is never to be understood without allusion to the grace of God—it is, by parity of reasoning, to be inferred that the texts which express exclusively the influence of grace on the human recipient, in the same work, are not to be understood without some reference to his spiritual condition. It certainly cannot be denied that they *may be* so understood, and that therefore, only on this ground, there is no necessity for taking the passages in an absolute sense; or, in other words, they do not prove the Calvinistic perseverance.—But we can easily proceed beyond the mere negation of the competency of these passages to the purpose for which they are adduced, or even the reasonableness of their referring to some antecedent or co-existent traits in the human character, by the argument just drawn from the texts which speak solely of the obedience of man. There are not a few

passages of Scripture, which actually describe the operations of God's grace, on his rational creatures, as in some sense connected with, or even dependent upon, their demeanour; for instance, James iv. 6—8, 10; Phil. iv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. v. 6; Matt. v. 6, vii. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 12; and, in a word, one of the greatest of blessings, justification, is represented in Scripture as dependent on a certain antecedent faith which is necessary to its reception; not to mention that a continuance in a state of acceptance is inseparable from the same vital principle of action. It is beyond all contradiction evident, that the bestowal of the grace of God is represented as contingent on some sentiments, emotions, or conduct in man.—They supply, therefore, an additional reason to the last, and even a stronger argument for the assertion, that the declarations of the divine decrees—and the promises of triumph to the conflicts of the saint, contained in the fifteen texts under consideration, may imply the same contingency—and therefore are by no means proofs of the Calvinistic doctrine. But farther, as it is nowhere declared in Scripture that these acts of the grace of God, justification, sanctification, and preservation in a state of acceptance, are ever bestowed on his rational creatures, without there being at least some antecedent or concomitant disposition of mind or spirit for their

reception, and that disposition is several times revealed as preceding, or accompanying them, it is probable that it does in all cases though not expressly mentioned in every instance, for this simple reason, as far as we have proceeded at present—because we have no authority from Scripture for denying this representation to be true—and because all the positive information is in its favour; and we cannot but believe the similar contingencies to be general when the revelation of such contingencies is made without limitation or restriction.

We cannot argue from the silence of Scripture, in some parts against its positive direct instruction in others, but must rather borrow light from its fullest revelations to the explanation of its silence. This conclusion is converted almost into absolute certainty with respect to perseverance, by the consideration that the commencement and continuance of a state of salvation is constantly described in Scripture as being inseparably connected with a lively faith in Christ, (1 Pet. i. 3—5; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xv. 13); that it is impossible that a man who renounces the faith can be one who perseveres—and by the fact that it is expressly revealed that faith is a mean by which the saints are preserved by God for everlasting glory, as it is written in one of the passages already quoted (No. 16), “kept through

faith unto salvation" (1. Pet. i. 5,) to which may be added, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) It is impossible to deny from only these two passages, that, as far as we are informed, the being kept in heart and mind by the peace of God, and the being kept in perseverance, are both of them performed by God through the means of the faith and the prayers of his people—and, of course, we can judge only by our information.

Now this argument may be confirmed by the examination of some of the fifteen passages themselves; several of them appear to indicate the same truth. For example, that which is regarded as the most valuable evidence of the doctrine of final perseverance by the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*,—"My sheep hear my voice," &c., &c. It can require no proof that the sheep of Christ who follow Him can be only believers in Him. And it is very deserving of remark that Christ does not say that believers shall always hear his voice, and shall continue to believe in Him. His words go no farther in this respect than the implication that the persons who deserve to be entitled his sheep, do hear and obey his word. And there can be no doubt—if we assume that eternal life

here signifies the rewards of heaven—that Christ gives these rewards only on the supposition that the sheep continue believers in him to the last period of their existence.

Similar observations may be made on John iv. 14, and John vi. 35. It is reasonable to understand our Saviour in these sentences to have signified that a man who truly believes in Him, has, so long as he believes, a constant source of comfort within him from which the desires of his soul may be satisfied, (See also Romans xv. 13.) It is perfectly certain that it must be by faith that the blessings intimated are conferred on man, on the general principle that without faith the soul cannot be in a state of grace. If any proof were wanting that the believer is the only person of whom our Saviour speaks, it is supplied even by the context (John vii. 38,) and our Saviour must signify that the believer would never thirst so long as he continued in the faith.

The same reflections apply to John vi. 37—40, 47, 51, 58.

The majority of texts advanced by our opponents are perfectly capable of the same interpretation. For instance—"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19); "Much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10); "Then shall ye also appear with him in

glory " (Col. iii. 3, 4.) All these and such like expressions must imply the assumption that they do not abandon the faith of the Gospel, and even Rom. viii. 29, 30, may be placed in the same category. In verse 28, the blessings are restricted to those who love God.

It appears, therefore, from a variety of considerations, that perseverance involves a lively faith, and that till it can be shown that final apostasy from the faith is an impossibility, the promises of God to keep the believer unto the end may signify that he will do so on the supposition or the condition that he will at least labour to continue in the faith. There is nothing to affect this conclusion, in the texts marked 17 and 18—no abstract impossibility that the earnest and the seal will not be withdrawn, if the persons to whom they are vouchsafed violate any conditions on which those tokens were bestowed. The earnest in (17) may signify as to infallibility only the sign of ratification of a contract between two parties, one of whom may at some future time dissolve the agreement if he renounces the faith; and the seal, in (18) may be simply on the part of God, a mark of election to the day of redemption, unless the elected on theirs remove it by their apostasy. This view of the passages will be much supported, supposing it is taught in Scripture, as will appear

on further inquiry to be the fact, that the elect will be saved, if they do not apostatise—for there is no unreasonableness in supplying this hypothesis in all similar cases where it is omitted; and it will be still further confirmed and established as indisputably certain, if it could be made to appear that the perseverance of the elect is not in all instances a necessary consequence.

Of (19) it is sufficient to remark that Whitby has proved that it cannot be understood to signify the certain impossibility of even the deception of the elect; much less of the final fall from election; of (20) and (21) that they expressly do not apply to the purpose; of (22) that it is a prayer on a particular occasion.

And, in a word, with regard to all the preceding arguments, it may be safely affirmed, that, however possible or otherwise it may be for the believer to relapse finally into infidelity, the question of final perseverance may be fairly considered as coincident with this—whether such a relapse is possible.—And if it can be shown that this is the case, it will at once appear, not that the passages hitherto advanced in favour of the Calvinistic tenet *may* be received with certain restrictions, but *must* of necessity be so understood, and that the final perseverance of Calvinism has no foundation in truth.

Proceed we now to those texts and arguments which show the necessity of qualifying and modifying the preceding passages—and which disprove the Calvinistic theory.

Now, the first argument which I shall adduce in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine, is one which is included in the list of texts cited by the Calvinist in its favour. It is derived from that passage of St. Paul to the Philippians, where he describes himself as “being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ.” (Phil. i. 6.)

I observe, in the first place, the Apostle expresses only his confidence or persuasion that the work would be continued to the day of Christ. Now, if the Apostle had known that it was an invariable law of God’s dispensations that incipient faith should never entirely cease but always terminate in a state of acceptance, it is impossible in any reasonable manner to account for the Apostle’s affirming that as a matter of belief or trust in the case of the Philippians who had had fellowship in the Gospel, when he must have been certain of it as a point of fact. If he had known that the Philippians must persevere to the end because God ordained that all who were once created anew in Christ Jesus would infallibly continue in a

state of salvation to the conclusion of their earthly career, is it to be imagined that he could only have said that he *trusted* in their final perseverance? His only trusting in the completion of the work alluded to, shows that there was something in the case which fell short of absolute certainty; and, indeed, according to the most reasonable mode of interpretation, he derives his confidence from the circumstance mentioned in verse 5—their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. He is thankful to God for their adherence to the faith from their first hearing of the Gospel to the date of his Epistle; as he is confident that God will keep them through faith till death shall put a period to their probationary state. The circumstance which makes him thankful and joyful for their constant fellowship in the Gospel from first to last is the confidence which he receives from it, that the work will, by God's grace, be continued to the termination of their course. This is the only grammatical interpretation of the passage apart from all considerations of the doctrine in dispute—considerations which, of course, ought to be excluded in order to that impartiality which is necessary to an unbiassed judgment. The passage is, in fact, perfectly open to the same subaudition which we have contended for in the quotations preceding, that God would

complete the work of faith in the souls of the Philippians if they continued to use the means of grace. And the meaning therefore of the passage agreeably to the preceding remarks, will be that the Apostle has confidence from the previous fidelity of the Philippians that they will persevere in the use of those means, and that therefore God would enable them to finish their course with joy. And at all events, the expression of mere confidence in the perseverance of the Philippians and the ground of their former fidelity, on which that confidence is based, are evidences that the Apostle did not know of that argument which would have been supplied by the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance, had it been agreeable to the truth, and which would have rendered all others superfluous and nugatory. In a word, as the Apostle knew not the doctrine of the Calvinist, it is not the doctrine of inspiration, and is undeserving of our belief.

But I turn to arguments more direct and positive; and first to some of those derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews. And here I cannot fail to remark, that it must be allowed by all persons who have inquired in a proper manner into the purport of that Epistle, that its main design is to dissuade the Hebrew Christians from a relapse into infidelity. It would not consist with the concise-

ness which I propose to myself to prove this point; I think it is already sufficiently established. I have no doubt in the world that it is capable of as a rigid demonstration as almost any truth of revelation. Now then, as this is an object of the Epistle, one doctrine is necessarily signified, which is denied by the advocates of final perseverance, that it is possible for those who have been once under the influence of grace to return to a state in which nature is predominant.

This, however, does not prove but that they would again recover their lost condition. But from the Epistle itself, if we descend to one or two of its parts, we shall see the divine authority for denying its probability, and even doubting whether it be so much as possible; for instance, (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.) “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, &c., &c.” A short sentence can scarcely describe in more significant expressions the state of new creatures of Christ than a portion of the one preceding. It is quite certain that such men as these must have been elected to a state of salvation in this life according to what we have seen

election is represented to be in the New Testament. But these disciples may fall away because the inspired Apostle admits the supposition of their apostatising—a supposition which he could not have admitted if he had known such apostasy to be impossible. But this is not all. He adds that if these elect persons do fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. How then can it be imagined that no man who has been converted to the faith can fall away, and be finally drowned in perdition. Supposing that the Apostle does not really signify that it is utterly impracticable, to reconvert any one apostate of that description, surely it must be contrary to all rational interpretation to believe that this passage of St. Paul is compatible with the doctrine that it is quite impossible for the convert to renounce the faith, and if he does renounce it, quite impossible that he should *not* be restored to a state of repentance.

The Apostle is not sparing of this doctrine. In the same epistle (chap. x. 26—29), he writes:—
“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of

how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." It is capable of proof, as we have said, that the Hebrews intended had been elected to a state of salvation (indeed it is included in the passage that they had been sanctified by the blood of the Covenant), and it is equally demonstrable that the sin signified is a renunciation of the faith like that spoken of in the last quotation but one. It is evident that this sin is regarded as possible, and that, in case of its commission, there would probably remain for those who were guilty of it only a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation which should consume the adversaries.

This passage therefore certainly does not countenance the imagination, that the believer can never by any possibility renounce the faith, and must infallibly attain to life everlasting.

The Epistle to the Hebrews affords another strong argument to the same purpose, (x. 38, 39.) The Apostle there implies its being possible for some believers to draw back unto perdition, by hoping that the Hebrew Christians would not thus fatally apostatise. See this proved in Whitby's *Discourse on the Five Points*. (Dis. v. chap. ii.

§ 4.) See also Luke viii. 13. We here find an allusion to the apostasy of believers in the general description of different characters of hearers under the figures of various soils—in the parable of the sower, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” This, like several others, is alone sufficient to show that continuance in faith is not absolutely decreed—nor is it, if lost, always finally recovered. The hearers who are represented by the rock, not only do not adhere to the faith, but cannot be supposed, as they have no root, to have ever borne fruit which is gathered into the barn of the great husbandman.

Another very powerful declaration in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance occurs in 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb—The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and

the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." In order to show that the persons spoken of had been elected to a state of salvation, it is necessary only to observe that they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that they had known the way of righteousness, and had been "washed." And here they are supposed to be entangled again in those pollutions—to turn from the commandment delivered to them, again to their own vomit and wallowing in the mire. Besides which, we are informed that the latter end of these apostates is worse than the beginning—and that it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness.

A palpable evidence this that those who are created anew in Christ, can lose the blessings of that second creation. And that a man who has embraced the faith may not be kept by God from a latter end which is even worse than absolute heathenism.

The text which I shall next adduce is that profession made by St. Paul of himself in 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

The Apostle appears to have briefly described

in this, and the verse immediately preceding, the course of Christian life which he followed—with one of the motives which urged him to the pursuit, the fear if he did not thus conduct himself of his being (by interpretation) a castaway. Now, there can be no doubt that he was one of the elect, in the highest sense of the word. And it is remarkable that the word used for castaway is that which is elsewhere translated by reprobate; so that he feared he should become reprobate without the temperance which he recommends. Indeed, if he were not in fear of becoming reprobate, there is no such thing as reprobation mentioned in the New Testament; for it is only by the word which St. Paul has employed in this instance that the idea has been expressed. And the very fear which St. Paul avows that he felt is ample evidence that he was not at all conscious of the doctrine that the elect could not fail of salvation. For it has been ably shown that the terms used (1 Cor. ix. 24—27) are metaphorical—derived from the Isthmian games, and their application has been clearly pointed out (¹). The competitor in the games who was “castaway” did not obtain the prize. The Christian castaway loses his incorruptible crown. The labours of the Apostle were endured to avoid so dreadful an issue of his contest. He of course did not labour to prevent that which he knew was

this ordination are elsewhere represented, as my readers may remember, not as made to the certain inevitable enjoyment of eternal salvation, or without any reference to their characters. An account of the mode in which our Saviour chose them has been transmitted to us (Matth. iv. 19—21 ; Matt. ix. 9). The objects of that choice have also been clearly revealed ; one of them could not be the certainty of salvation in consequence of the fate of Judas the traitor. But we are plainly informed that our Saviour chose them to make them fishers of men (Matt. iv. 19, or Mark, i. 17) ; ordained them that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. (St. Mark, iii. 14, 15 ; Matt. x. 1 ; xxviii. 19, 20).

And the selection was not made irrespectively of character and circumstances ; Christ chose them partly because they were unlearned, uninfluential members of the community. (1 Cor. i. 27, 28). He chose them, probably, because he saw they were, generally speaking, fit for the service which he intended them to fulfil. Now, the great purposes of their election and ordination are very significantly described in the verse at present under discussion. Our Saviour reminds them that they did not choose him, but he them, and ordained

them that they should *go* and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain; that “whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” The intention of the appointment having been elsewhere plainly stated, it is reasonable to interpret this passage, which would, by itself, be of doubtful import, by the aid of those less mysterious revelations. That they should *go* then is very strikingly referable to the Apostles (Matt. xxviii. 19), “*going* into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and *going* to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Matt. x. 5, 6, 7); and the bringing forth fruit which should remain, may be very reasonably understood, of converting men to the Church, which should remain to the end of the world (Matt. xvi. 18; xxviii. 20). The concluding clause also is a repetition of what was spoken in John xiv. 13, and in close connexion with the mention of the works of the Apostleship. This is a further clue to the interpretation of our text, thus more evidently declaratory of God’s design to assist the Apostles in their work according to their prayers, and of Christ’s choosing them for the ministry. We have three substantial grounds, therefore, for excluding this text from the advocacy of Calvinistic election.

From passages of scripture, most of which are evidently without the smallest comment, uncon-

nected with the point at issue, we proceed to others of a very different character. I select those first which seem to indicate very satisfactorily that the condition to which Christians are elected by God, is one which refers to the present state of existence. The first I notice are Rom. ix. 24 and xi. 7, and I begin by reverting to the observation made near the close of chap. iv., part iv., as applicable to the remnant, according to the election of grace, mentioned in Rom. xi. 5, by comparing this verse and verse 7 of the same chapter with Rom. ix. 24, 30, 31, it is very easily deducible, that the election signified was to the advantage of a spiritual life on earth. It is something which the election "hath obtained" and it is evidently "righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith." The next text to which I refer, is 1 Pet. 1, 2. The Apostle there pronounces his disciples to be *elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood* of Jesus Christ. Here, there cannot be the slightest question that the election respects the condition of the elect in the probationary state.—A similar judgment may be pronounced with almost equal certainty relative to 1 Thess. i. 4. The Apostle, if his observations which follow verse 4 be read in connexion with that verse, is evidently assigning his reasons for knowing that the Thessalonians were elected of God. These appear to be all

of a description which can be applied to man, only while he continues in the world.—Again, in St. James, ii. 5, we read “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him. The position into which the persons elected are here represented as introduced is beyond all question identified with that in which men are placed in the present state of probation. The language of the Apostle can signify an election to a security of eternal life, only on the supposition of the impossibility of a final state of apostasy of which the incorrectness will be shown in the succeeding portion of this chapter. (See for the present Rom. viii. 17).—A fifth passage, in which the same doctrine is revealed, as we have noticed in the four last quotations is Eph. i. 4. 5. “According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself.” Here, again, the expressions are applicable to the present life, and I believe exclusively to that state according to the usage of Scripture in other places, “that we should be *holy and without blame* before him *in love*; having *predestinated us unto the adoption of children*.” I

believe, in every instance where Christians are represented as living "in love," and the *sons or the children of God*, it is with reference to the life which now is. (See, for example, Eph. iii. 17; iv. 2, 15, 16; v. 2; Col. ii. 2; 1 Thess. iii. 12; v. 13; 2 Tim. i. 13; 1 John, iv. 16, 18; Eph. v. 1; Heb. xii. 5; 1 Pet. i. 14; 1 John, iii. 10; John i. 12; Rom. viii. 14, 19; Gal. iv. 5—7; Phil. ii. 15; 1 John, iii. 1, 2). I do not exclude Rom. viii. 19, as it is from the general use of the terms employed to be understood of the manifestation of those who had been sons of God on earth.—And in affirmation of the doctrine for which I contend, I adduce also 1 Pet. ii. 9, though it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of this passage is not so ascertainable as that of those which have preceded:—"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people—that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The purpose of the election, and of being made a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, is here described as the declaration or enunciation of the goodness of God. It appears, I think, most probable, that this enunciation signifies a work of the present state of being. (1st.) The word employed by the Apostle seems adapted to the publication of God's goodness

among mankind. (2ndly.) It is an interpretation supported by 1 Pet. ii. 5, where the design of the same people, as a holy priesthood, is descriptively confined to this life. (3rdly). By the fate of the "disobedient" mentioned in verse 8, who are set in opposition to the disciples of the Apostle; and lastly, by various passages in the Septuagint and the New Testament, of similar import or expression. (Deut. xiv. 2; xxvi. 18; Ps. cxxxv. 4; Isaiah, xlii. 8, 12; xliii. 21; lxiii. 7; Acts, xx. 27; Rom. ix. 17; Luke, ix. 60.) To these considerations it may be added that it is reasonable to believe the passage in question to be conformable to the others which we have previously adduced, as admitting a definite interpretation.

As to the texts which remain, there is only another which, under any very literal form of expression, describes the nature of election. It is one which appears, probably, to some persons to be decisive against our doctrine, but which must, in fact, be interpreted much in the manner alluded to at the conclusion of the last paragraph. The passage which I have in mind is 2 Thess. ii. 13, wherein it is written, "God hath chosen you to salvation." There are those who imagine that salvation in this place, and in all other passages of Scripture, must signify the blissful condition of the saved in Heaven. But this, as is well known,

is by no means the case. The word salvation occurs about forty times in the New Testament. In many instances it appears to be incapable of this construction, *e. g.* (Luke, ii. 30; iii. 6; xix. 9; John, iv. 22; Acts, iv. 12; xiii. 26, 47; xxviii. 28; Rom. x. 10; xi. 11; 2 Cor. i. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Eph. i. 13; Tit. ii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 15; Jude 3, &c.) In these, and in some others, it appears to refer, if not exclusively, at least in part, to some circumstances connected with salvation in the present life. Of the entire number of examples of the word salvation, very few more than six are evident and exclusive allusions to life eternal. And there are several of which there is strong reason for believing, if we examine the passages where they occur by themselves, that they signify the condition of acceptance or salvation in this mortal state. One example of this kind is Heb. vi. 9. The Apostle assures his Hebrew disciples that he was persuaded better things of them than unbelief, and things which *accompany* salvation. If “accompany” were not considered to exceed the force of the original, it would be at once decisive of the question. It is not, however, too much to affirm that St. Paul certainly conveys to us the idea of proximity to salvation, and it is beyond dispute certain, as will be almost immediately evidenced by Scriptural testimony, that

believers are *saved, in this life*, by faith. Now, an argument which, together with the knowledge of this fact, seems quite sufficient to establish the truth of our interpretation is, that the Hebrews, to whom St. Paul wrote, were evidently wavering in their faith, and that it appears to impute a very reasonable intention to his words, to suppose them to signify agreeably to their very natural signification, that those persons were not far removed from the faith which *accompanies* salvation.—A similar interpretation may be assigned to 1 Pet. i. 9, 10. The disciples of the Apostle are said to be actually receiving the salvation of their souls. The translation appears not here to admit of any reasonable dispute. It follows as a matter of direct consequence, that the salvation which they were receiving, was coincident with their own natural lives. I think it might be shown without much difficulty, but not in that space which I am willing to afford to the inquiry, that the same signification is, at least, included in Rom. i. 16, 17; x. 10; Luke i. 69; Phil. i. 28; Phil. ii. 12; Luke, xix. 9; 2 Cor. vii. 10; 2 Tim. iii. 15. Compare also Tit. iii. 3—5; 2 Tim. i. 9. It is also observable that in two of the passages, where eternal salvation is so evidently signified as to admit of no question, there are adjuncts employed—by which it appears that the word without them

might be capable of another interpretation. It is further worthy of notice, that where the Apostle has, with least appearance of ambiguity, alluded to the purpose of God and of man in this state of probation; with respect to eternal salvation he, several times, if not always, expresses it as *the acquisition* of that felicity. (1 Thess. v. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. x. 39.) If the word translated salvation, in 1 Thess. v. 9, does not mean everlasting salvation, but salvation in the present life, the passage is of course more in our favour.—But that salvation is a state of reconciliation to God which commences in this world is reduced *to a certainty*, by a few passages where the idea of being *saved* is *most unequivocally* expressed with reference to the present life.—One passage of this kind is Acts, ii. 47, where it is written in the Greek, that God added to the Church “*such as were saved, or were in a state of salvation.*” Similar passages are the following:—(1 Cor. i. 18; xv. 2: 2 Cor. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 5, 8; 2 Tim. i. 9; Luke, vii. 50; 1 Pet. iii. 21; Rom. viii. 24; Tit. iii. 5). There cannot exist a shadow of doubt that the salvation there alluded to refers to the present state of existence.—It is likewise, I believe, *unanswerably* true, that the Scriptures also, under a variety of phrase, reveal to us the salvation of the believer in his probation—(See my *Course of Christian*

Obedience). On all these grounds, therefore, there is ample authority for the assertion that it is perfectly consistent with the sacred oracles of the Christian, to ascribe salvation to the believer—to that state into which men are brought (as in 2 Thess. ii. 13), through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.

So that, on the whole, it may be safely affirmed that we are at liberty in cases which are doubtful in themselves to interpret salvation by a condition of the soul previous to its departure from the body ; and that we ought so to interpret it if there appear any cogent reasons for such a conclusion. Such reasons have already been adduced in the pages immediately preceding with respect to the state of election ; as in five passages out of the seven, where the nature of election is described as to its reference to the temporal or eternal state, it is most unquestionably referred to the former ; and more or less probably in the remainder.

It will be a corroboration of our view of Election as referring to the present life, if we can show, as will be seen hereafter, that the elect do not necessarily persevere to the end in a state of grace.

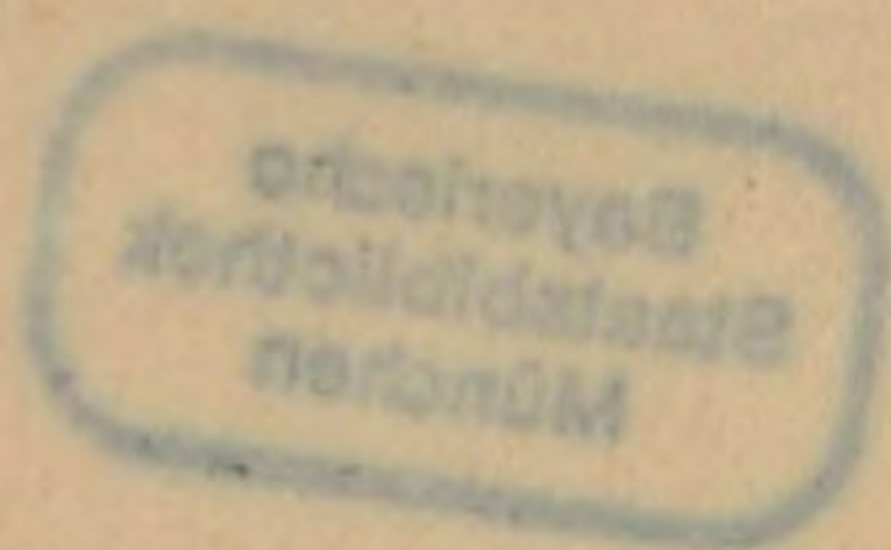
There now remain but two passages expressly

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relating to election, which it is necessary for me to cite in the branch of the subject we are now considering. They do not, in themselves, convey any definite idea of election, and may, therefore, be referred to that description which the Scriptures appear elsewhere to afford—to that, indeed, which we have already partially advanced. The passages are Rom. xi. 5 and 28, which concern the election of the seven thousand whom God had reserved to himself, and whom we believe to have been elected from the context, as I have previously remarked, and from other portions of the New Testament to a present state of salvation.

Thus have we, I believe, gone through the examination of all but four (Luke, x. 42 ; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28 ; Rev. xvii. 14) of the passages contained in my limits which expressly refer to any kind of election—and it appears that they fall very far short of the assertion of the doctrine that God chooses men without any regard to their condition or circumstances, or to an infallible certainty of everlasting salvation. At the same time, it must be admitted, that if it be true that persons who are once elected into a state of salvation must always continue therein or cannot finally fall away—then, of course, a temporary election comes to the same thing as being elected to a certainty of everlasting



salvation. Whether this be agreeable to fact will be the subject of inquiry in the succeeding section.

Now, the first of the four remaining passages which I adduce is Rev. xvii. 14. This text is certainly not of much service in elucidating the nature of election, and might, perhaps, with great propriety have been arranged in the non-descriptive class of our Scriptural extracts. It rather favours our views of election than otherwise. I think the addition of the idea of continued faithfulness to that of election shows that the one does not succeed the other as a necessary consequence. There is a gradation, a climax, in the three terms employed. The continuance in the faith appears to be added as something more important than the election, which could hardly have been the case if election were necessarily a predestination to certain salvation.

This application of the passage to the subject of the present section, is certainly not superior to cavil. It may be said that the words signify that the persons spoken of were called and chosen, and *of course* faithful. But I would first deny the right, from the passage, to supply the words *of course*, or any of similar import, before *faithful*, and not to prefix the same words to *chosen*. Is there not as much reason in the passage for doing

one as the other? Why, from the passage itself, should there appear any necessary connexion between any two of the terms? and if it is certain there is no such connexion between two of the terms in succession, why should not the same independence be conceived to exist between the other two, which are joined by the copulative? Now, we know that election does not by any means follow the *call* as a matter of necessity, for “many are called but few chosen;” as, therefore, the second term does not necessarily follow the first, we have grounds in the passage for thinking rather than the contrary that the third is not, of necessity, consequent on the second. But the supply of words, significant of a direct consequence, rather concerns the question of final perseverance which comes for consideration in the next section. If final perseverance is a true doctrine, it would be allowable to make faithfulness necessarily succeed election. But if it is contrary to Scripture, as I trust it will appear to be, then Rev. xvii. 14, describes those who were better than others in obeying rather than rejecting the call of God, and were chosen, and, when chosen, did not fall away as some did and as they might have done, but continued faithful to the end.

The availableness, therefore, of the passage to the subject of this section, noticed at the com-

mencement of our remarks upon it, is, I trust, above all reasonable contradiction.

The few observations which will follow on the rest of the passages, may show the fallacy of the Calvinistic doctrine in some of its details.

In one of those excluded passages, the election is mentioned, not as an act of God, but *of man*, and *the object of that election can not reasonably be believed to be distinct from the means and method of salvation*—(See Luke x. 41, 42), where Martha is informed that there is but one thing needful, and that Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word, had chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her. So that, it would appear that the election is at least in part compounded of human action, empowered, no doubt, by the grace and ability which God giveth.

The other two passages, as yet unnoticed, I reserved till I had arrived at this place, because they do not describe the nature of election to salvation—and because they are two out of several, which not only show what must be believed, that the acts of the Almighty proceed, if we may so speak, from the best of motives and for the best of purposes, but also materially aid the proof that the design of the divine mind, as we argued in chap. II., is agreeable to the dictates of reason. The passages I allude to are 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, by which

it appears that God selected weak human instruments for the execution of his plans, in order, most probably, to show that the success was attributable solely to Himself. This passage might, indeed, be sufficient to check the presumption of those who contend that God selects men even for salvation irrespectively of their qualifications, merely because it is his pleasure; that pleasure arising from causes which are not perfectly reasonable. But there are more appropriate arguments in disproof of the doctrine of irrespective election, or at least irrespective grace. St. Paul actually informs us, almost as plainly as words can make the truth, that he obtained the mercy, probably, of conversion from God, *because* he committed his sins ignorantly and in unbelief, (1 Tim. i. 13), and was enabled by God to assume the ministry of the word, *for that* he accounted him faithful (¹). (1 Tim. i. 12.) These are convincing proofs that God did not bestow grace upon him or the Apostleship, without regard to any part of his life or character. Again, our Saviour prayed (Luke, xxiii. 34), that God would forgive his murderers, *because* they did not know what they did. If God accepted men without respect to any thing in their lives, how could Christ pray his Heavenly Father to regard *their ignorance* as a reason for his accepting them? Abraham again was

chosen on a particular purpose by God, because he knew him that he would command his children after him. (Gen. xviii. 19.) Now, if there were only these few cases on record to show that God does regard points in men's characters and circumstances when he confers his favours upon them, and when we have no texts to declare that God does ever select or elect men without reference to any element in their composition, why should we believe that he ever does deal with men in this manner; on the contrary, how is it possible not to believe the direct reverse of this opinion, since all that is revealed is plainly opposed to it?

It appears, then, we trust, at present, that election of individuals is not revealed as being to a certainty of eternal life, unless final perseverance is inevitable—that election is probably a joint act of God and of man—and that, thirdly, God does not elect without such motives as appear to us to be perfectly just and reasonable, agreeably to the arguments which we adduced in chap. II.

PART VI.

The uncertainty of final perseverance.

THERE are several elements of fatalism necessary to the formation of a complete system of Calvinistic doctrines. The election of the favourites of Heaven must be made without the slightest exertion of their volition or agency—without the operation of any other cause than the absolute undefinable will of the Almighty, and without the slightest possibility of any termination of their lives in a state of alienation from Him. On the two former topics we have already made a few observations, and one of them in particular will call for a very lengthened discussion in a subsequent chapter. This appears the proper place for the consideration of the doctrine of perseverance. It will be sufficient to disprove the absolute nature of election, if we can establish the precariousness of its continuance to the term of our natural existence.

The course which I intend to pursue in this branch of my subject will be to show—that the principal arguments in favour of the Calvinistic theory convey no intimation whatever that the final

perseverance of the saint is a fact of constant occurrence, and to conclude the inquiry with the evidences of the fallacy of this part of the system to which I am opposed.

It is giving our antagonists the greatest possible apparent advantage, in attacking their strongholds before we have taken any direct steps for establishing the correctness of our own views of the subject. But I hesitate not to avow my firm conviction that none of the texts advanced against us can be regarded, by fair interpretation, as a revelation of the universal certainty of perseverance, independently of the most direct testimony to the contrary, and that some of the supports proposed for the creed in dispute, present scarcely the appearance of foundation.

It is certainly under the fullest assurance that the Calvinistic tenet of final perseverance is contrary to other parts of Scripture, that I commence my criticism of the alleged evidences of its opposite doctrine. But though I am impelled by the strongest reasons for disputing the accuracy of the interpretation to which I am opposed, yet I trust the method of investigation which I adopt is one that is extremely obvious, and would force itself upon the notice without the slightest extrinsic necessity.

The principal grounds on which the Calvinist

seems to build his theory of final perseverance, are the following texts of Scripture:—

- (1.) (John x. 27—30.) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave me them is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” (2.) (John iv. 14.) “He that drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (3.) (John vi. 51, 58.) “He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever,” which according to Mr. Scott is explained by (4, 5.) (John vi. 35, 47.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you; he that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (6.) (John v. 24.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death *unto life*.” (7.) (John vi. 37—40.) “This is the Father’s will who hath sent me, that of all whom he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will

of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (8.) (John xiv. 16—19.) "I will give you another comforter who shall abide with you for ever. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you. Because I live, ye shall live also." (9.) (Rom. v. 10.) "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (10.) (Rom. viii. 1, 34.) "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God—who also maketh intercession for us." (11.) (Col. iii. 3, 4.) "Your life is hid with Christ in God—when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (12.) (Rom. viii. 29.) "Whom he justified or justifies, them he glorified or glorifies." (13.) (1. Cor. i. 8, 9.) "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (14.) (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) I pray God your whole Spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." (15.) (2. Thess. iii. 3.) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." (16.) (1 Pet. i. 3, 5.) "Of his abundant mercy he hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." To which may be added (17.) (Eph. i. 13, 14.—iv. 30.) "Sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise who is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession—sealed unto the day of redemption." (18.) (2 Tim. ii. 19.) "The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth Christ depart from iniquity." (19.) (Matt. xxiv. 24.) "If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect." (20.) (1 Thess. v. 9.) "God hath not appointed you to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (21.) (2 Thess. ii. 14.) "He hath called you by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (22.) (Luke xxii. 32.) "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." In this series of quotations, which I have numbered for the sake of reference,

I have endeavoured to collect the main strength of the Calvinistic arguments. They appear to give such satisfaction to the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*, that he reflects on that which I have placed at the head of the list, on which he lays the greatest emphasis, in the following terms :—"What are we to suppose these energetical words to mean, if, after all, they who really do follow Christ, of whom exclusively he speaks, should be so tempted and overcome as finally and eternally to perish? Would an act of grace or deed of gift, worded in such precise, absolute, and unqualified language, admit of being explained away by limitations and exceptions not so much as intimated in it? Would the parties concerned think the trustees or administrators of such a grant or deed dealt fairly with them, if they thus excluded them from the benefit of it." Pp. 679, 680.

Now, in making this the starting point of our investigation, I must frankly acknowledge that I am constrained to pronounce this passage more worthy of the pulpit of a declamatory enthusiast than of the chair of a divine who has bestowed attention on biblical literature. The author speaks, as if he considered that the Scriptures were, in every individual part, very clear and explicit, and complete upon the subject of the doctrines of which it treats,

and that they are written throughout with all the precision of the best legal or literary compositions. Whereas, nothing can be better ascertained that not only this is not agreeable to fact, but almost the reverse of truth. It could not be unknown to such a commentator as Mr. Scott, that the whole of a doctrine is frequently not delivered in one particular passage or one connected series of passages of Scripture ; that much may be understood or supplied, from Scripture, in various individual portions of the contents of the Bible, in order to define their true significations ; that the Scripture is therefore not to be interpreted like a regularly written work of human genius, which generally aims, in every division of its subject, at the greatest perspicuity ; and that the interpretation of single passages of Scripture by themselves has been productive of some of the most enormous errors of theology. None acquainted with biblical criticism will deny that comparisons of various parts of the sacred volume are necessary to show under what limitations, or with what allowances, general and concise expressions are to be received, and are thus often requisite for the acquirement of a correct view of a single sentence ; and that the principle on which Mr. Scott appears to have interpreted the text particularly alluded to, is not to be admitted ; that a passage may be understood in its

apparent sense, considered by itself, merely because it is, if considered by itself, apparently clear and intelligible.

Cases to prove the point immediately at issue might be produced in great numbers; as for example—the text: “Ask and ye shall receive.” It is impossible from these words, separately considered, to learn either the person to whom the petitions are to be preferred, the particular objects for which they are made, or the time and manner in which they are to be performed. These subjects in almost all their main particulars must be sought from other pages of the Bible. But I shall confine myself to those examples which are most appropriate to our present question. It is then very remarkable, that in numerous passages of Scripture, the work of salvation, either whole or in part, is spoken of almost or quite without any intimation of the operations or the influence of the Spirit.

The following catalogue of such places, by no means inconsiderable, might be much enlarged, St. Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 14, 15; Acts xx. 21; Acts xxvi. 20; St. Matt. v. vi. vii. *passim*. xi. 28-30, xiii. 23, xvi. 24—27, xviii. 1—9, xix. 16—22; Luke viii. 15; Col. iii.; 1 Thess. iv. and v.; Philipp. i. 27; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16; James i. 22; 1 John iii. 3; v. 18; Jude, 20, 21.

It might be affirmed, from these and such like passages, considered separately from others, that portions of the work of salvation, if not the entire work itself, were the effect solely of human exertion. Whereas it is well known, that man is unable of himself to do anything that is good in the sight of God. The Scripture constantly describes obedience to the will of God, as, in some sort, the joint operation of God and man. This fact is evidenced by the passages which allude separately to the works of both, and by such texts as the following:—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do" (Phil. ii. 13); "Without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5); also (1 John v. 18) "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." I attempt not now to define in the smallest degree the nature of this co-operation. I assert only that it is in terms, so described in the Gospel, and that, without God's grace, man is incapable of spiritual enterprise.

But this information is obtained from other passages of Scripture, than those which describe the acts of man, as if they were independently his own; and which must therefore not be interpreted by themselves, and are a sufficient evidence of the fact that that principle on which Mr. Scott appears

to have understood the text (John x. 27—30), is unsound and indefensible.

Now it may be observed *of the first fifteen* of the preceding texts alleged by the Calvinist, in defence of his doctrine of final perseverance, that they cannot possibly afford him their support, unless they are intended to speak absolutely of the preservation of the saint by the divine power in the way of salvation to the very last, without that preservation being any way dependent on any part of man's character or conduct.

It is not, however, positively stated nor even intimated in any of those passages, that it is so unconnected with the human recipient. If it can be shown that the preserving grace of God does not in any degree or manner depend on the will, or the sentiments, or the works of man, the proof must be sought from other Scriptural sources; on the principle that we may compare one text of Scripture with another, in order to arrive at its true signification. And could we discover a single sentence in the Book of Revelation, which declares, in a way which cannot be misunderstood, that whenever the acts of divine grace, and particularly that of preserving the believer from eventual apostasy, are mentioned, it is always signified that they have no dependence upon the previous condition of the human soul, it would supply

a very satisfactory evidence of the fallacy of our own opinion. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the Gospel. We are not debarred, therefore, from comparing the texts adduced on the side of our opponents by any inspired declaration of this description. We are at liberty, in fact, to consult other portions of Holy Writ, and we will avail ourselves of the privilege.—And it may be remarked, in the first place, that, as the compliance of man with the divine will, in working out his salvation, is never to be understood without allusion to the grace of God—it is, by parity of reasoning, to be inferred that the texts which express exclusively the influence of grace on the human recipient, in the same work, are not to be understood without some reference to his spiritual condition. It certainly cannot be denied that they *may be* so understood, and that therefore, only on this ground, there is no necessity for taking the passages in an absolute sense; or, in other words, they do not prove the Calvinistic perseverance.—But we can easily proceed beyond the mere negation of the competency of these passages to the purpose for which they are adduced, or even the reasonableness of their referring to some antecedent or co-existent traits in the human character, by the argument just drawn from the texts which speak solely of the obedience of man. There are not a few

passages of Scripture, which actually describe the operations of God's grace, on his rational creatures, as in some sense connected with, or even dependent upon, their demeanour; for instance, James iv. 6—8, 10; Phil. iv. 6, 7; 1 Pet. v. 6; Matt. v. 6, vii. 7; 1 Pet. iii. 12; and, in a word, one of the greatest of blessings, justification, is represented in Scripture as dependent on a certain antecedent faith which is necessary to its reception; not to mention that a continuance in a state of acceptance is inseparable from the same vital principle of action. It is beyond all contradiction evident, that the bestowal of the grace of God is represented as contingent on some sentiments, emotions, or conduct in man.—They supply, therefore, an additional reason to the last, and even a stronger argument for the assertion, that the declarations of the divine decrees—and the promises of triumph to the conflicts of the saint, contained in the fifteen texts under consideration, may imply the same contingency—and therefore are by no means proofs of the Calvinistic doctrine. But farther, as it is nowhere declared in Scripture that these acts of the grace of God, justification, sanctification, and preservation in a state of acceptance, are ever bestowed on his rational creatures, without there being at least some antecedent or concomitant disposition of mind or spirit for their

reception, and that disposition is several times revealed as preceding, or accompanying them, it is probable that it does in all cases though not expressly mentioned in every instance, for this simple reason, as far as we have proceeded at present—because we have no authority from Scripture for denying this representation to be true—and because all the positive information is in its favour; and we cannot but believe the similar contingencies to be general when the revelation of such contingencies is made without limitation or restriction.

We cannot argue from the silence of Scripture, in some parts against its positive direct instruction in others, but must rather borrow light from its fullest revelations to the explanation of its silence. This conclusion is converted almost into absolute certainty with respect to perseverance, by the consideration that the commencement and continuance of a state of salvation is constantly described in Scripture as being inseparably connected with a lively faith in Christ, (1 Pet. i. 3—5; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xv. 13); that it is impossible that a man who renounces the faith can be one who perseveres—and by the fact that it is expressly revealed that faith is a mean by which the saints are preserved by God for everlasting glory, as it is written in one of the passages already quoted (No. 16), “kept through

faith unto salvation" (1. Pet. i. 5,) to which may be added, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7.) It is impossible to deny from only these two passages, that, as far as we are informed, the being kept in heart and mind by the peace of God, and the being kept in perseverance, are both of them performed by God through the means of the faith and the prayers of his people—and, of course, we can judge only by our information.

Now this argument may be confirmed by the examination of some of the fifteen passages themselves; several of them appear to indicate the same truth. For example, that which is regarded as the most valuable evidence of the doctrine of final perseverance by the author of the *Remarks on the Refutation*,—"My sheep hear my voice," &c., &c. It can require no proof that the sheep of Christ who follow Him can be only believers in Him. And it is very deserving of remark that Christ does not say that believers shall always hear his voice, and shall continue to believe in Him. His words go no farther in this respect than the implication that the persons who deserve to be entitled his sheep, do hear and obey his word. And there can be no doubt—if we assume that eternal life

here signifies the rewards of heaven—that Christ gives these rewards only on the supposition that the sheep continue believers in him to the last period of their existence.

Similar observations may be made on John iv. 14, and John vi. 35. It is reasonable to understand our Saviour in these sentences to have signified that a man who truly believes in Him, has, so long as he believes, a constant source of comfort within him from which the desires of his soul may be satisfied, (See also Romans xv. 13.) It is perfectly certain that it must be by faith that the blessings intimated are conferred on man, on the general principle that without faith the soul cannot be in a state of grace. If any proof were wanting that the believer is the only person of whom our Saviour speaks, it is supplied even by the context (John vii. 38,) and our Saviour must signify that the believer would never thirst so long as he continued in the faith.

The same reflections apply to John vi. 37—40, 47, 51, 58.

The majority of texts advanced by our opponents are perfectly capable of the same interpretation. For instance—"Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19); "Much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10); "Then shall ye also appear with him in

glory " (Col. iii. 3, 4.) All these and such like expressions must imply the assumption that they do not abandon the faith of the Gospel, and even Rom. viii. 29, 30, may be placed in the same category. In verse 28, the blessings are restricted to those who love God.

It appears, therefore, from a variety of considerations, that perseverance involves a lively faith, and that till it can be shown that final apostasy from the faith is an impossibility, the promises of God to keep the believer unto the end may signify that he will do so on the supposition or the condition that he will at least labour to continue in the faith. There is nothing to affect this conclusion, in the texts marked 17 and 18—no abstract impossibility that the earnest and the seal will not be withdrawn, if the persons to whom they are vouchsafed violate any conditions on which those tokens were bestowed. The earnest in (17) may signify as to infallibility only the sign of ratification of a contract between two parties, one of whom may at some future time dissolve the agreement if he renounces the faith; and the seal, in (18) may be simply on the part of God, a mark of election to the day of redemption, unless the elected on theirs remove it by their apostasy. This view of the passages will be much supported, supposing it is taught in Scripture, as will appear

on further inquiry to be the fact, that the elect will be saved, if they do not apostatise—for there is no unreasonableness in supplying this hypothesis in all similar cases where it is omitted; and it will be still further confirmed and established as indisputably certain, if it could be made to appear that the perseverance of the elect is not in all instances a necessary consequence.

Of (19) it is sufficient to remark that Whitby has proved that it cannot be understood to signify the certain impossibility of even the deception of the elect; much less of the final fall from election; of (20) and (21) that they expressly do not apply to the purpose; of (22) that it is a prayer on a particular occasion.

And, in a word, with regard to all the preceding arguments, it may be safely affirmed, that, however possible or otherwise it may be for the believer to relapse finally into infidelity, the question of final perseverance may be fairly considered as coincident with this—whether such a relapse is possible.—And if it can be shown that this is the case, it will at once appear, not that the passages hitherto advanced in favour of the Calvinistic tenet *may* be received with certain restrictions, but *must* of necessity be so understood, and that the final perseverance of Calvinism has no foundation in truth.

Proceed we now to those texts and arguments which show the necessity of qualifying and modifying the preceding passages—and which disprove the Calvinistic theory.

Now, the first argument which I shall adduce in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine, is one which is included in the list of texts cited by the Calvinist in its favour. It is derived from that passage of St. Paul to the Philippians, where he describes himself as “being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ.” (Phil. i. 6.)

I observe, in the first place, the Apostle expresses only his confidence or persuasion that the work would be continued to the day of Christ. Now, if the Apostle had known that it was an invariable law of God’s dispensations that incipient faith should never entirely cease but always terminate in a state of acceptance, it is impossible in any reasonable manner to account for the Apostle’s affirming that as a matter of belief or trust in the case of the Philippians who had had fellowship in the Gospel, when he must have been certain of it as a point of fact. If he had known that the Philippians must persevere to the end because God ordained that all who were once created anew in Christ Jesus would infallibly continue in a

state of salvation to the conclusion of their earthly career, is it to be imagined that he could only have said that he *trusted* in their final perseverance? His only trusting in the completion of the work alluded to, shows that there was something in the case which fell short of absolute certainty; and, indeed, according to the most reasonable mode of interpretation, he derives his confidence from the circumstance mentioned in verse 5—their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. He is thankful to God for their adherence to the faith from their first hearing of the Gospel to the date of his Epistle; as he is confident that God will keep them through faith till death shall put a period to their probationary state. The circumstance which makes him thankful and joyful for their constant fellowship in the Gospel from first to last is the confidence which he receives from it, that the work will, by God's grace, be continued to the termination of their course. This is the only grammatical interpretation of the passage apart from all considerations of the doctrine in dispute—considerations which, of course, ought to be excluded in order to that impartiality which is necessary to an unbiassed judgment. The passage is, in fact, perfectly open to the same subaudition which we have contended for in the quotations preceding, that God would

complete the work of faith in the souls of the Philippians if they continued to use the means of grace. And the meaning therefore of the passage agreeably to the preceding remarks, will be that the Apostle has confidence from the previous fidelity of the Philippians that they will persevere in the use of those means, and that therefore God would enable them to finish their course with joy. And at all events, the expression of mere confidence in the perseverance of the Philippians and the ground of their former fidelity, on which that confidence is based, are evidences that the Apostle did not know of that argument which would have been supplied by the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance, had it been agreeable to the truth, and which would have rendered all others superfluous and nugatory. In a word, as the Apostle knew not the doctrine of the Calvinist, it is not the doctrine of inspiration, and is undeserving of our belief.

But I turn to arguments more direct and positive; and first to some of those derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews. And here I cannot fail to remark, that it must be allowed by all persons who have inquired in a proper manner into the purport of that Epistle, that its main design is to dissuade the Hebrew Christians from a relapse into infidelity. It would not consist with the concise-

state of salvation to the conclusion of their earthly career, is it to be imagined that he could only have said that he *trusted* in their final perseverance? His only trusting in the completion of the work alluded to, shows that there was something in the case which fell short of absolute certainty; and, indeed, according to the most reasonable mode of interpretation, he derives his confidence from the circumstance mentioned in verse 5—their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now. He is thankful to God for their adherence to the faith from their first hearing of the Gospel to the date of his Epistle; as he is confident that God will keep them through faith till death shall put a period to their probationary state. The circumstance which makes him thankful and joyful for their constant fellowship in the Gospel from first to last is the confidence which he receives from it, that the work will, by God's grace, be continued to the termination of their course. This is the only grammatical interpretation of the passage apart from all considerations of the doctrine in dispute—considerations which, of course, ought to be excluded in order to that impartiality which is necessary to an unbiassed judgment. The passage is, in fact, perfectly open to the same subaudition which we have contended for in the quotations preceding, that God would

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ness which I propose to myself to prove this point; I think it is already sufficiently established. I have no doubt in the world that it is capable of as a rigid demonstration as almost any truth of revelation. Now then, as this is an object of the Epistle, one doctrine is necessarily signified, which is denied by the advocates of final perseverance, that it is possible for those who have been once under the influence of grace to return to a state in which nature is predominant.

This, however, does not prove but that they would again recover their lost condition. But from the Epistle itself, if we descend to one or two of its parts, we shall see the divine authority for denying its probability, and even doubting whether it be so much as possible; for instance, (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.) “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance, &c., &c.” A short sentence can scarcely describe in more significant expressions the state of new creatures of Christ than a portion of the one preceding. It is quite certain that such men as these must have been elected to a state of salvation in this life according to what we have seen

election is represented to be in the New Testament. But these disciples may fall away because the inspired Apostle admits the supposition of their apostatising—a supposition which he could not have admitted if he had known such apostasy to be impossible. But this is not all. He adds that if these elect persons do fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. How then can it be imagined that no man who has been converted to the faith can fall away, and be finally drowned in perdition. Supposing that the Apostle does not really signify that it is utterly impracticable, to reconvert any one apostate of that description, surely it must be contrary to all rational interpretation to believe that this passage of St. Paul is compatible with the doctrine that it is quite impossible for the convert to renounce the faith, and if he does renounce it, quite impossible that he should *not* be restored to a state of repentance.

The Apostle is not sparing of this doctrine. In the same epistle (chap. x. 26—29), he writes:—
“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of

how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." It is capable of proof, as we have said, that the Hebrews intended had been elected to a state of salvation (indeed it is included in the passage that they had been sanctified by the blood of the Covenant), and it is equally demonstrable that the sin signified is a renunciation of the faith like that spoken of in the last quotation but one. It is evident that this sin is regarded as possible, and that, in case of its commission, there would probably remain for those who were guilty of it only a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation which should consume the adversaries.

This passage therefore certainly does not countenance the imagination, that the believer can never by any possibility renounce the faith, and must infallibly attain to life everlasting.

The Epistle to the Hebrews affords another strong argument to the same purpose, (x. 38, 39.) The Apostle there implies its being possible for some believers to draw back unto perdition, by hoping that the Hebrew Christians would not thus fatally apostatise. See this proved in Whitby's *Discourse on the Five Points*. (Dis. v. chap. ii.

§ 4.) See also Luke viii. 13. We here find an allusion to the apostasy of believers in the general description of different characters of hearers under the figures of various soils—in the parable of the sower, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” This, like several others, is alone sufficient to show that continuance in faith is not absolutely decreed—nor is it, if lost, always finally recovered. The hearers who are represented by the rock, not only do not adhere to the faith, but cannot be supposed, as they have no root, to have ever borne fruit which is gathered into the barn of the great husbandman.

Another very powerful declaration in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance occurs in 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb—The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and

how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." It is capable of proof, as we have said, that the Hebrews intended had been elected to a state of salvation (indeed it is included in the passage that they had been sanctified by the blood of the Covenant), and it is equally demonstrable that the sin signified is a renunciation of the faith like that spoken of in the last quotation but one. It is evident that this sin is regarded as possible, and that, in case of its commission, there would probably remain for those who were guilty of it only a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation which should consume the adversaries.

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the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." In order to show that the persons spoken of had been elected to a state of salvation, it is necessary only to observe that they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that they had known the way of righteousness, and had been "washed." And here they are supposed to be entangled again in those pollutions—to turn from the commandment delivered to them, again to their own vomit and wallowing in the mire. Besides which, we are informed that the latter end of these apostates is worse than the beginning—and that it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness.

A palpable evidence this that those who are created anew in Christ, can lose the blessings of that second creation. And that a man who has embraced the faith may not be kept by God from a latter end which is even worse than absolute heathenism.

The text which I shall next adduce is that profession made by St. Paul of himself in 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

The Apostle appears to have briefly described

in this, and the verse immediately preceding, the course of Christian life which he followed—with one of the motives which urged him to the pursuit, the fear if he did not thus conduct himself of his being (by interpretation) a castaway. Now, there can be no doubt that he was one of the elect, in the highest sense of the word. And it is remarkable that the word used for castaway is that which is elsewhere translated by reprobate; so that he feared he should become reprobate without the temperance which he recommends. Indeed, if he were not in fear of becoming reprobate, there is no such thing as reprobation mentioned in the New Testament; for it is only by the word which St. Paul has employed in this instance that the idea has been expressed. And the very fear which St. Paul avows that he felt is ample evidence that he was not at all conscious of the doctrine that the elect could not fail of salvation. For it has been ably shown that the terms used (1 Cor. ix. 24—27) are metaphorical—derived from the Isthmian games, and their application has been clearly pointed out (¹). The competitor in the games who was “castaway” did not obtain the prize. The Christian castaway loses his incorruptible crown. The labours of the Apostle were endured to avoid so dreadful an issue of his contest. He of course did not labour to prevent that which he knew was

impossible. He knew it was possible for him, therefore, to be lost notwithstanding his election. He did not believe in the absolute necessity of final perseverance.

I will now request the attention of the reader to that class of texts which contain such suppositions of the dependence of perseverance on the conduct of man as imply the negation of absolute certainty. One of this catalogue that deserves a very prominent situation, is the representation of Christ and his disciples under the imagery of a vine and its branches in St. John's Gospel, xv., with the context. He commands his disciples to abide in him; entitles himself the vine, and them the branches, and says, "If ye abide in me, and if my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; and if ye do whatsoever I command you, ye are my friends." He here evidently represents their reception of blessings, and even their continuance in the faith, as depending on their observance of his laws, and this observance he sets forth as uncertain. This view of the subject is confirmed in similar doctrine by the same Evangelist, in his first Epistle, ii. 24, "Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall

remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father." It is only necessary to add, to make the argument complete, that our Saviour also said (John xv.) that "if any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."

The Epistle to the Hebrews is again available to our purpose. Verses 6 and 14, of the third chapter, are strongly declaratory of the uncertainty for which we contend. It is indisputably certain, as we have observed, that the Hebrews had at least been believers in Christ—indeed the Apostle commences the chapter with styling the disciples his holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling. Soon afterwards he says—"God's house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," and "are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." It is impossible not to observe in these passages that there is a doubt expressed whether these possessors of confidence and joy would so persevere unto the end as to be the house of God and partakers of Christ; a doubt perfectly consistent with the grand design of the Epistle, and both that doubt and the design itself incompatible with absolute infallibility of salvation.

Another convincing argument of the truth of our doctrine, is furnished by St. Peter, in his Second Epistle (i. 10, 11.) He had in the fifth verse, and the two verses following, been enjoining upon his disciples the pious and moral duties of which the discharge is conducive to the attainment of eternal salvation. He afterwards adds, that if these things were in them and abounded, they would make them that they should neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that if they did these things they should never fall, for so an entrance would be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Here there appears an evident uncertainty that they would "do these things," and with this uncertainty is connected their never falling and their being admitted into the kingdom of Heaven. But farther evidence is perceptible in this passage. The Apostle supposes that the man who has been purged from his old sins may lack these things. And farther than this, he uses this as a ground of exhortation to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, by doing these things. This very common argument against the absoluteness of election to eternal salvation, is met by the author of *The Remarks on the Refutation*, with an assertion of a favourite doctrine with Calvinists

of the signification of the words being to make the election of the Christian sure to himself, to labour to obtain a stronger conviction of the certainty of his destiny for an immortality of happiness. I am, however, under the necessity of avowing my belief that this writer has made here a gratuitous assertion and in evident opposition to the most powerful arguments. It is very well known that the original word rendered sure signifies such as has stability—such as is firm and solid on its footing or foundation, and even if it can mean moral conviction by itself, which I very much doubt, it is certain that it has no such signification in this place, for the context plainly teaches *what* is intended by *making election sure*, it is not that the elect shall *believe* or *feel* that they *are elected*, but that if they do certain works which are specified, they will neither be “*barren nor unfruitful*” in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and shall never *fall*, but *be actually admitted* into the kingdom of Heaven. The words immediately following “Make your calling and election sure,” are, “for if ye do these things [the works already alluded to] “ye shall never *fall* ; *for so* an entrance,” &c. (See Place.) This explanation given by the Inspired Writer, is in perfect accordance with the genuine sense of the word which is Englished by “sure.” Thus the text shows not only the uncer-

tainty of Christians doing these things, which are necessary to everlasting life—but also that their election is not necessarily to endure, that they are not secure of not falling and of an entrance into Heaven—but that they have to make their election permanent, and to ensure their future interests, by their own diligence in the employment of the means of grace, and by the exercise of Christian virtues.

I cannot but regard Rom. viii. 17 as strongly in favour of the same uncertainty. The ambiguity of the particle which is rendered by “if so be” in our translation alone introduces a question on the subject of this quotation. I know of no person but Hooegeveen, who has determined its signification unfavourably to my own judgment. But he happens to have assigned his reason for the opinion he has advanced, and I think it is very evident that it is extremely erroneous ⁽²⁾. But not only does his argument not hold good; there is very strong ground for believing that the signification is rightly given by our translators. I allude most particularly to the accordance of our translation in this place with the context contained in verse 13. The Apostle there most unquestionably uses the language of supposition. It appears only such a consistency as might be expected, when he is enlarging on a point connected

with that passage. This consideration, combined with the general uncertainty which we see elsewhere expressed, shows, I think sufficiently, the probability of the correctness of the authorised translation. But even on the low supposition that it ought to be written *since* we suffer with him; we find a reason assigned which would have been superseded and out of place, had the apostle been sensible of their security of salvation by an irreversible and infrustrable decree of the Almighty. The reason of the Apostle shows he was unacquainted with the other. It must also not be forgotten that the thirteenth verse, already quoted, is an argument strictly in point. There is no possibility of doubting that the Apostle speaks hypothetically in both cases, and that he represents the future state of his converts as undecided, and as dependent on their conduct, which might be according to the flesh or the spirit.

The last text which I bring forward is one which by itself cannot be interpreted with perfect certainty—though it cannot fairly be questioned that the argument in favour of our translation greatly preponderates. It is Coloss. i. 21, 22, 23. “And you—hath he reconciled—to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope

of the Gospel." Instead of "*if* ye continue in the faith," it MIGHT without regard to extraneous reasons be written, "*since* ye continue," &c. Mac-knight has thought proper to adopt this translation, but for reasons which appear to me to be frivolous and inappropriate. He thinks it agrees better with the good opinion which the Apostle entertained of the Colossians; and since they firmly maintained the true faith of the Gospel, the Apostle had no doubt of their being presented at last unblameable in Christ's sight. But there is nothing expressed in the passage about the Apostle's believing, or trusting, or hoping, or having no doubt, that they would be thus presented at the last. The language he has employed is not analogous to that in Phil. i. 6—"Being confident that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"—it is a positive declaration to present you unblameable; *if* or *since* ye continue. Now with all due submission to that generally useful and venerable commentator, the reason of the Apostle, as he would represent it, is insufficient and improper. It cannot with truth and justice be assigned. To present you unblameable at the last since you *now* continue in the faith (I insert the word "*now*" merely for greater plainness) is palpably false, unless they were supposed to have departed this

life at the present instant. They could not be presented holy at the last unless they were in the faith at the last. According to Scripture, therefore, to say that they were to be presented at the last because they were in the faith at the present time, unless the Apostle had meant they were all to die at the time he wrote, which it is ridiculous to imagine, is evidently absurd: a sufficient objection to the new translation and an adequate reason for adhering to that of the Church. But, besides this, there are strong grounds for the opinion that the word translated "continue" means strictly to continue with respect to process of time—not to continue to the present moment, but to proceed in a state of continuance. It is so translated by authority in Acts, "abide *still* at Ephesus," and I think is capable of that signification in every passage where it occurs in the New Testament. This is an additional reason, if one were wanted, for submitting to the Church translation.

It may be observed that on the wild supposition that "since" were the true version, the passage would still be in disproof of the Calvinistic tenet of final perseverance. For how could St. Paul have given that as a reason for his elect disciples being presented unblameable, when he must have known, had the Calvinistic doctrine been true,

that that was not the reason why they would be so presented. (See also 2 Cor. xiii. 5.)

I here close my review of this class of passages, and indeed do not think it necessary to proceed with the proof of our subject farther than by observing that there is a multiplicity of texts in the New Testament, containing exhortations to persevere, fears of non-perseverance, commands, suppositions, comminations, and cautions, which cannot be accounted for, in any rational manner, on any other hypothesis than the possibility of human defection, and which, together with our preceding arguments, present such a combination of evidences, without any modifying revelations, for our tenet, as cannot be produced for many other established articles of the Christian faith.

I think it will be impossible to make it in the least degree credible after the examination contained in this and the preceding section, that the "call" in Rom. ix. 24, and of which we spoke by anticipation towards the end of Chap. IV., Part IV., is not an election to a state of acceptance in the present life without any security of final salvation. It is to this state that the Israel within Israel was elected, and the "call" of a *portion of Israel* Mr. Scott imagined he discerned in Rom. ix. 6, as the principal object of that passage.

Whether he were correct in this opinion is a matter of very little consequence, though I think I have suggested a few arguments quite sufficient to show his inaccuracy, and equally unimportant had it been if the body of Romans ix, were designed as an illustration of that position, though even that this is its design, I have been obliged to disprove. The truth, which is all-sufficient for our purpose, is simply this, that the interior Israel were not elected to any state agreeable to the Calvinistic views.

It ought to be recollected that our examination of Scripture results in the same conclusion as the consultation of our reason in Chap. III., and thus the argument is corroborated by the mutual agreement of the two highest authorities by which the questions in dispute can be brought to a determination. And I trust arguments have been advanced sufficiently numerous and plain to warrant the presumption expressed in our Chap. IV. Part IV., that the whole passage from verse 9 to verse 24 of Rom. ix., is one of complete consistency, all referring to men in their temporal condition, and that "truth" has "prevailed" in our exposition of election "over one of the greatest of Calvinistic errors."

CHAPTER V.

OF FREE WILL.

WE are now arrived at a division of our subject which is most capable of undergoing, and has frequently undergone, much metaphysical discussion. My own belief has long been that metaphysics will never decide the question for consideration—that in this case it is Scripture alone that can be understood with sufficient *certainty* for that purpose—that it is impossible to discern accurately, and to demonstrate to the exclusion of all reasonable doubt the nature of our spiritual constitution in this respect, from the exercises of self-examination and reflection. This is far from an unsupported opinion⁽¹⁾. At all events, I would have it observed and continually borne in mind, that Scripture is exclusively the ground of my own theory. It is to be hoped that the metaphysician of the present day will find it a refuge from his perplexities.

It will conduce to clearness in our statement of the important subject of this chapter if I first declare the belief of which I intend to endeavour to establish the reasonableness and the truth. I believe then that all men living converted or

unconverted to Christ are or have been endowed with freedom of the will, and by freedom of the will I understand that they are at liberty to incline either to good or evil—to either particular acts of one kind or others of a contrary nature. I say *are or have been*, for the interpretation of Scripture, which I have been instructed to adopt, induces me to maintain that there may be among mankind those who were once possessed of the freedom of the will, but who, by habitual and inveterate wickedness, have provoked God to withdraw from them that liberty, and to leave them to the uncontrollable and irremediable force of evil passion, so that they have neither power nor inclination to discharge any of the duties of religion, but are of necessity wholly disposed to unrighteousness. A freedom of the will which some writers are accustomed to advocate is that by which a man can naturally incline only to sin. I never could understand on what rational principles any one could be said to be free to will, if he could not possibly have willed more than in one particular manner—or for one exclusive object—a will that is not at liberty to incline either way, where there are two opposite acts or courses of action, cannot, according to my apprehension of the meaning of words, justly bepronounced, to be free; at least, that is not the kind of freedom which is agreeable to the

definition of the term which I propose to give, and which I engage to defend. I contend, under the limitation to which I have already restricted the doctrine for a freedom of will even in the unconverted, by which they can incline either to evil or to good. Yet I would by no means be understood to signify that any of those who have not yet embraced the religion of Christ, and are nevertheless gifted with liberty of will, possess the talent of resolving to perform all *kinds or degrees* of Christian piety. There are many stages in religious excellence, attainable by the more advanced in righteousness, to which I believe they are incompetent in their comparative degradation. I only intend to signify that there are various kinds and degrees of inferior works of righteousness, of a determination or inclination to which they may be capable; some at least of the means of grace to a certain extent; that these they may have the option to employ or to reject—and that if employed they may be subservient to conducting them onward to higher spiritual acquirements.

This may suffice for a profession of my creed. Now, one of the first objections that will probably arise in some minds to this view of the subject, is that it appears to them to be contrary to the doctrine of the Church, contained in the Latin text of her ninth Article (²), which they perhaps

interpret to signify that all men, before they are converted to Christ, are "inclined" *only* "to evil." It may be believed, however, that the framers of the Article did not intend that men are naturally as far removed from original righteousness as it is absolutely possible. It is quite certain, in the first place, that if they had desired to make the most unmodified assertion of that doctrine, they might have easily employed terms which are more express and unambiguous. And another more obvious ground for the opinion that the compilers of the Formulary in question, did not contemplate the very extreme to which their assertion could by any possibility be carried, is to be found in its English Translation. The words are not that man is as far gone as possible from his original state, at the Creation, but only that he is very far gone from it. The English Articles appear to have been signed by the Church, in convocation, about nine years after their first composition in Latin in their present form; both the original and the translation executed in the episcopate of the same metropolitan—and with the approbation of a large proportion of identically the same subscribing members of the Ecclesiastical Council. (Bennett, ch. vi. xx.), and both bearing equally the stamp of authority. (Tomline, *Articles*, p. 35.) And whatever may be the construction to be

imposed on the original phrase in all its strictness, the Church may well be received as its own interpreter. But it is not on this verbal criticism merely that I found my opinion that it cannot be the doctrine of the Church that the rational creature, previously to his conversion, must be placed at the very extreme distance from the righteousness of our first parent in his original nature. The words of the Article evidently apply to the *carnal* nature of man *exclusively*. They speak particularly of the nature of every man that “*naturally is engendered* of the offspring of Adam,” “of his being *of his own nature* inclined to evil, so that the *flesh* lusteth always contrary to the Spirit,” “of the state of every person *as born into this world*,” (See the Latin), “of an infection of *nature* whereby *the lust of the flesh* is not subject to the law of God.” These expressions appear to warrant the assumption that the authors of the Article signified the condition of a man by birth from a fleshly parent, and that it is *the flesh* which is intended as being most remote from original righteousness, whatever may be the precise distance contemplated. A similar observation obtains with respect to the quotation from the Homily on Whitsunday—which is substantially as follows, that man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal without one spark of goodness in him.

There is no objection to proceed very great lengths indeed in interpreting the passage in this sense, as we are well assured that “what is born of the flesh is flesh,” and that “in the flesh dwelleth no good thing.” It cannot, however, reasonably be imagined that, even on this supposition, the signification of the passage under consideration, could possibly be, that the flesh of man is as far opposed to the laws of God as possible for any of God’s creatures. I suppose that no one would pronounce the flesh to be perfectly as corrupt as the nature of the prince of darkness. And if the Latin be interpreted to signify that man *is as far removed from original righteousness as is possible for that which is of carnal nature*—there need not be supposed to be *any contradiction* between *that* and *the English version*—as what is as far as possible for the flesh to be removed from righteousness, may be said to be only very far gone from that perfection. But the very extreme interpretation that can be assigned to the passage when restricted to the flesh militates not in the least against the doctrine of free-will, which I have advanced. It ought to be recollected, though it appears to be frequently overlooked by former disputants, that when we are speaking of men arrived at years of understanding, we do not contemplate beings which consist solely and exclusively of the *flesh*,

but compounded of the flesh and of such sentiments, inclinations, and feelings as have been superadded since their entrance into this state of existence. There may be perpetually, as I shall endeavour to prove from observations on the world, unconverted individuals, advancing towards youth or manhood, or age, whose remoteness from righteousness by no means lies on the utmost verge of possibility. There are often, we are assured by experience, some degrees and kinds of goodness in such men's hearts, in their wills, and in their understandings. For instance, as to their hearts—men who grow up without a knowledge of Christ, even without faith in God, and certainly those who are not converted to God through Christ, are frequently observed not to be without a natural affection towards their relatives,—towards their parents—husbands and wives, and children—and, not that I rest the argument entirely on this fact—natural affection to our kindred is commanded and approved by God. So, again, humane and compassionate feelings towards our fellow-creatures, commiserating and alleviating their distress, are good sentiments and works, and enjoined on Christians by their heavenly master. Now, these are sympathies and practices that have been experienced and followed by persons who are not the faithful disciples of Christ. Thus

their hearts were not altogether corrupt and utterly void of every kind and degree of goodness. It is no answer to this assertion to reply, as it has been urged, that these emotions and acts are not good in the sight of God, because they do not proceed from faith, and that they cannot be pronounced good, if they are not so accounted by him. I wave all inquiry at the present moment into the quality which the Scripture appears to affix on the best actions and sentiments of unbelievers. It is sufficient to rejoin to the objection which has been advanced, that it does not in reality touch the point at issue. It is not signified that any affection or work of the unbeliever is absolutely good in the judgment of the Almighty. It is contended only that he cannot be wholly corrupt in his feelings, and as far gone as possible in these respects from original righteousness. Because it is a matter of fact which is evident to any person of common understanding that if such men were as far removed as is possible from that righteous state, they would feel nothing but hatred of their fellow-creatures and their kindred; and hatred and aversion of the bitterest and most ruthless description. So that, far from loving in the least their nearest relations and pitying either them or strangers in distress, they would delight with the utmost intensity of rapture only in doing them the

greatest possible injury, and in observing the very extremes of suffering. And as this is not the real representation of their character, it is impossible to pretend with any semblance of truth, that they are literally as far gone as possible from the native purity of their first progenitor.

So again, as to the understanding. If a man were nothing whatever but corruption, unconverted to Christ, he would have no distinctive perception of right and wrong, of good and evil, and false and true whatever—no powers of distinguishing mentally between one thing and another. He would be a madman, or an idiot—not at all superior, but rather inferior to the brute; for, take the doctrine at its word, that man is as far gone as is possible from right-mindedness, we must imagine ourselves to descend lower in the scale of existence. He must not only not perceive things at all correctly, but must apprehend every intellectual object in a manner just the reverse of propriety. But this is not the case. Many a heathen has been possessed of great mental powers, and has formed not very unjust conceptions of moral virtue, and true philosophy; and the same may be predicated of multitudes in a nominally Christian land, that may not be much nearer than the heathen to vital Christianity. This, then, is a second reason for

denying that man, previous to conversion to Christ, is as far removed as is possible from a state of righteousness.

The third point we instanced was his will. That again is not so depraved as we must believe to be possible. The wills of men, under the general influence of nature, do not always determine or incline them to commit the most ungodly deeds that can be conceived. They are often disposed to perform some acts that bear some resemblance at least to the works of holiness. Perfect corruption would be to incline, in every particular act or circumstance as much as possible in opposition to those duties which the Scriptures prescribe; so that it would be impossible to discern in any thing they do the remotest likeness to any act which God commands or approves. But this is very far from being the case, in many persons, and in many respects. To adhere to the few examples which we have already adduced natural affection and sympathy. Those who are aliens from the religion of Christ, oftentimes regard their friends with charity, and exhibit some striking approximations to that conduct which Christianity pronounces to be neighbourly. They must therefore determine to act in this manner. They must will to do so. Their will, therefore, is not utterly averse to every moral virtue, or is not as opposed

as possible to those acts and conduct which are righteous in the estimation of our supreme law-giver and judge. From this statement of facts it is evident that though the ninth article of our Church signifies that the carnal nature of man is literally as far gone as possible from original righteousness, nevertheless it leaves open to consideration and inquiry whether man in adolescence and manhood may not have free will, even before he has embraced the religion of the Gospel.

II. A second objection to the doctrine which I have ventured to profess on the subject of this chapter is that it denies that the goodness of man proceeds from the grace of God. This is one of the most unfounded, mistaken notions that appear ever to have been entertained by persons of opposite opinions. I should as soon think of denying that free will is not of grace as that there is a Creator and governor of the world. What their opponents can have thought of those divines who are advocates of free will, I am utterly at a loss to conceive on any rational grounds. For how, I would respectfully inquire of such objectors, how could it be otherwise than by the grace of God that any man is gifted with free will? Could it be supposed that he creates free will himself, or that he has any other giver of such a blessing than Him who made him. It is such an unreasonable

imputation to the maintainer of free will that he ascribes it not to the grace of God, that I scarcely know how to treat it with seriousness. It shows into what absurdities religious, as well as other disputants will fall, with respect, at least, to their adversaries. It may be observed, in this place, that, according to Calvin's own expressions, the whole question is at rest when we admit that we ascribe the will of man to grace (³). So little did that learned man understand his subject.

III. The next class of objections which I propose to consider consists of arguments professedly derived from Scripture. The number of texts adduced for this purpose has been considerable. It is perfectly necessary in a work of this nature that some allusion at least must be made to the principal allegations of previous writers. There is a celebrated assertor of highly Calvinistic opinions, but one who appears to have approached the subject with too great a levity for the caution necessary to the investigation of truth, to whom we may refer for a sufficiently well-stored treasury of what of course I deem the perverted passages. There is not one of them, I believe, which may not be ranged under one of the following categories—either such as have no reference whatever to the human will, or such as declare God's dispensations to men subsequent to their good or evil

conduct, or such as leave the mode of the operation of the Spirit unexplained, and are perfectly consistent with our own doctrine (⁴).

There are a few of the most striking and important perversions of Scripture, some indeed not included in that writer's work, which it may be proper to notice more particularly. Of this kind is the argument that the thoughts of the unconverted are exclusively evil because it is revealed that antecedently to the deluge, every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. (Gen. vi. 5.) But this conclusion by no means follows from the premises. The inspired writer, speaks in this place, not of the moral condition of the world in ordinary circumstances consisting of inhabitants of almost every variety and mixture of character, but of the most corrupted age probably that ever existed since the creation, and when men had brought the very lowest degree of depravity upon themselves by their wilful continuance in unrepented wickedness. The depravity of mankind had arrived at that degree which called for the censure of the Almighty by their perseverance in sin. It is a melancholy and stupendous example of the downward tendency of carnal indulgences. That this was the case there can be no reasonable ground of doubt; because the sentence was pronounced, as we must believe from the

tenour of the context, nearly at the close of that period of 120 years, during which the Spirit of God had been contending with man, and at the beginning of which the earth was greatly corrupted. Besides it is expressly stated in verse 12 that all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

Again, it is said that the same degree of wickedness was predicated of mankind immediately after the deluge. "The Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. viii. 21.) It has always surprised me that the commentators, whom I consulted, have never observed in express words that the English translation cannot be literally correct, inasmuch as it is not to be believed that it would please God to assign as a reason for his not punishing the earth, that which of course must operate with him as a cause for a diametrically opposite course of procedure. It is, I think, evident that we are to understand that God would not curse the ground any more on account, as he had done, of men's hearts being continually evil. The sentence may imply that the world would never again be so corrupt as it was previously to the flood, and that, therefore, there would never again be the same necessity of vengeance. But, however this may be, the passage does not assert that all

men's thoughts are only evil continually, and it is perfectly true that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, without at all conflicting with our doctrine that God inspires some thoughts and feelings and dispositions of a different nature into his soul. And this, in a further stage of our argument, I shall show to have been actually the case. Another of the passages on which much emphasis is laid by the writer to whom I have alluded, is, Prov. xxi. 1. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever he will." I must, however reluctantly, prefer this translation to that of the seventy. It is more literal. But, even with this disadvantage, there is nothing in it at variance with the doctrine which I maintain. It is no article of my belief to deny that God turneth the hearts of those who seek Him, or hardens those who reject Him. There is nothing stated in this passage, nor anywhere else in Scripture, to prove that God performs these operations on man without any reference whatever to his will, or to deny that man had not previously any free will whatever. Again, Acts xvii. 28 is impressed into the same service, but with the same inefficiency. It is sufficiently evident, in the first place, that St. Paul had not in view the inculcation of the doctrine of necessity. It was not his object in that place to teach or deny

free will. He was endeavouring to instruct the Heathen that the true God was a living God—who gave us life and our moving powers. It is contended that the Greek signifies we are moved by God. It might with equal propriety be answered that it means we move ourselves. Thus it proves nothing in the case; but even assuming the correctness of the translation of our opponent, I should find no difficulty in allowing that we are moved by God, as everybody must allow, according to his good will and pleasure, and agreeably to the laws by which he regulates his dispensations.

As I engage to select the passages which afford the most plausible grounds of objection, I will proceed to a few observations on Acts xvi. 6, 7. The Holy Ghost forbids the Apostles to preach, and suffers them not to go to the parts they actually attempted to visit. Here there is pretended to be a denial of their freedom of will. It is only reasonable to believe that this interference of the Spirit was something miraculous—as in xvi. 9. Hammond and Koppe produce other examples. We certainly do find that the Holy Spirit had recourse to miraculous interventions. Therefore it is only agreeable to the spiritual operations of that early period, that it should be so in this case. But, however this be, there is no

reason whatever for thinking that the will of the Apostles was not free both when they essayed to go into Bithynia, and when they turned their steps in another direction. The Holy Spirit's not suffering them to proceed on that journey, may be very reasonably understood as a command of some kind, which they, as good servants of Christ, would not disobey; though they might have wished to do so if they pleased. But it is not necessary to dwell on this passage, as the freedom of the will by grace in *the converted* is not a matter of dispute.—Matt. x. 19, 20, is always, I believe, allowed to be an extraordinary exercise of divine inspiration—but even this implies no coercion of the will.—The arguments from Matt. xxiii. 34, 35, Mark xiv. 18, 27, vanish immediately, and are almost turned into their opposites by merely substituting, as we are at perfect liberty to do, the word “will” for that which is supposed to involve the whole doctrine of necessity. Although again it might be shown that on the other supposition it is perfectly consistent with our doctrine that the previous rebellions and infidelity of the persons concerned should have destroyed freewill and should be followed with greater measures of iniquity.

Of the passage Rom. vii. 15—24, I shall observe at present only that it is one of the number

which I shall bring forward in support of my own creed. From this review of the principal passages adduced, I proceed

IV. To the brief consideration of the argument, if argument it can be called, that the assertion of the freedom of the will virtually infringes on the divine omnipotence.

I believe it cannot be complained by advocates of this opinion, that I understate their sentiments, if I give it the form following, that if man can do in any circumstances as he pleases, that God has not all power in his own possession, and is therefore not omnipotent.—I think it is a sufficient reply to this objection to observe, that as the power to will either for good or evil is given to man by God, the regular use of that power by man no more limits the power of the Almighty than the regular course of nature, which God suffers to proceed in, for instance, the vegetable world. God establishes an order of nature which he never alters. And, as far as we can possibly understand, intends never to alter; and if such is his intention, God may therefore perhaps be said to have, as it were, renounced the power to alter it—for instance, in many respects as to the growth of trees, or generation of fruits—that a particular plant shall bear a particular leaf, or a particular edible production. But we cannot reasonably

deny God's omnipotence on that account. In the same way it is absurd to assert that his omnipotence is affected, because he has granted to man certain powers which he invariably, under particular circumstances, exerts agreeably to his constitution, and will probably always exert so long as he continues in existence. The liberty in one case, and the necessity in the other, make no essential difference. They are both of them agreeable to his pleasure and both of them established, and therefore one is as little as the other opposed to his pleasure, and one is as much as the other a limitation to the exercise of his power without virtually destroying it.

The only remaining objection which I shall think it necessary to notice is,

V. That the doctrine of freewill is opposed to that of predestination. (Scott. Page 87.) It appears to be argued by the Calvinist, that whatever is fore-known by God must be fore-ordained by him—that it could not be fore-known without its being fore-ordained. Now, supposing that men were left perfectly free by God to act always in either of two different manners, supposing that man were perfectly independent of any controul or influence from God in this respect, is there any impossibility, is there any difficulty in believing in that case that God would always know before-

hand what conduct man would in every instance pursue? Certainly none whatever. Therefore, that God knows how man will act in every instance, can be imagined to be consistent with the greatest liberty in man—and much greater liberty and independence than we have any intention to maintain. From the examination of the principal objections which have been urged against the freedom of the will in the unconverted, I proceed to the statement of a few presumptive arguments in its support.

It is no slight consideration in favour of the freedom of the will, that it appears, as I believe Bishop Tomline has somewhere remarked, to be agreeable to our senses. We feel that we are at liberty in many different cases to do either of two opposite actions. We are naturally sensible, for example, that we can either move the various members of our bodies or keep them motionless, that we can either employ our speech or remain silent, walk from place to place or continue stationary. Infinite is the number of actions of choice, in which by the exercise of our natural judgment we are convinced that we can make what selection we please, so that it seems repugnant to our experience to deny that we have not the liberty to act or to forbear.

It is also worthy of observation that the Scrip-

tures and our Church concur in teaching that there is a contest between the flesh and the spirit even in the unconverted, "My spirit, said God, shall not always strive with man." This is said of man in his alienated state from God, a state in which he unhappily persevered. Our ninth article signifies in its first paragraph that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit in persons who are not renovated according to the Gospel. Now, on both these accounts it appears that there is some degree of the divine spirit in the unconverted, and as there is not always an utter destitution of grace in those over whom the flesh exercises dominion, it is not improbable that amongst the graces with which they are endowed should be comprehended that freedom of will, which appears to be one of the first necessary for the works of holiness.

Under the present division of our subject, deserves to be included the consideration that the doctrine of necessity has a tendency to make men continue in sin and impenitence. That it has this tendency is apparent on the slightest reflection. The unconverted man, who believes in this doctrine, is inwardly convinced that he has no will, nor power to turn to God, or to make any efforts or advances towards conversion. He consequently uses no kind or degree of endeavour whatever to emerge from the depths of his corruption and

iniquity. He has, as he believes, only to wait the time when it may please God to move him by some impulse, more or less powerful, to holy or penitential exertion. It is of no avail that he is exhorted to humble himself before God ; it is in vain that he is entreated to hear the word, to repent, to believe, to pray, and to strive. He believes he has neither power nor inclination to do anything whatever that is good. In short, he who believes in the absence of all freedom of will, and of all power to obey the law of God, can feel no power nor inclination, and can be under no obligation to attend to the means of grace, and may therefore continue in the utmost neglect and forgetfulness of God, in expectation of his call at some uncertain period. Confessions of this kind have come within my experience ; such a man may believe, according to the Calvinistic theory, that he is one of that multitude to whom God does not intend to offer grace, that it is perfectly useless and presumptuous for him to hear the calls to repentance, that they are not intended for him, that they are addressed to all, but are meant only for those who are willing to receive them. And as he has neither power nor will to do anything that is in the least degree good, he may persevere in his wicked way, till God sees fit to inspire him with new dispositions and abilities. And if this

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Evidences frequently occur in the Bible of the freedom of the will in the unconverted, and in persons who remained in that condition. For instance, (John xii., 35, 36). It is impossible, in any rational manner, to account for our Saviour's commanding his unbelieving hearers to walk, while they had the light, and to believe in the

light, that they might be the children of light, unless we understand that the people to whom he spoke were at liberty to be willing to comply with his injunctions; and yet, even on the supposition that v. 37 does not refer to them in particular, it is very probable, from the general conduct of the Jews, and our Saviour's withdrawing himself from them in a manner that indicates his disapprobation of his reception, that they did not embrace the faith.

It is not improbable, indeed, that the reflections of the sacred historian, contained in verses 37 and 39, apply particularly to the persons before whom our Saviour spake. In this case, it is certain that their infidelity continued after the delivery of his exhortation. This application of the 39th verse creates no difficulty in the question before us; it by no means follows from it that our Saviour enjoined belief on persons whom he knew to be utterly incapable of its attainment: we should be unwarrantably confounding *inclination* and *ability*, were we to affix this construction upon the passage. The inability expressed by the Evangelist denies not a freedom of the will. In our last quotation from Rom. vii., it was observed that the person, whose spiritual character and circumstances were described, was not *able* to perform his religious duties; yet he appears to

have enjoyed a freedom of volition. Thus it is evident the Jews, to whom our Saviour had directed his discourse in verses 35, 36, might have possessed the gift of that freedom, notwithstanding the inability under which they appear most unquestionably to have laboured.

But the supposition of a freedom of the will in the persons to whom our Saviour spoke on this occasion is not only perfectly allowable, and agreeable to revelation, but is, I would rather say, necessary for a right understanding of the whole passage. Indeed, we have been explicitly informed that the Jews, in general, persevered in their infidelity through the default of *willing* to believe. Our Saviour teaches this when he gives utterance to these expressions of complaint against them—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life; and how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not." "Oh that thou, even thou, hadst known the things which belong to thy peace! but *now* they are hid from thine eyes." The fault is laid by our Saviour on them for being unwilling, and it is only till the last that he says their salvation is entirely concealed from their sight, or not before that time that they seem to have been deprived of all will as well as power. Besides which, if we do not

believe in the liberty of the will of these Jews, we shall blasphemously charge some inconsistency on Christ in commanding his hearers to do that of which it was impossible they could take the least means towards the accomplishment; and, indeed, it appears to be perverseness of their wills that constituted the great difference between their case and its final infidelity, and that described in Rom. vii. of him who eventually obtained the victory, as Hammond has aptly observed on Mark, iv. 12. The Jews not being *able* to see *for want of light* through the obscurity of parables, was a punishment of their *winking* and not being *willing* to see; by which sentiment he of course understood the obduration of their hearts, and the closing of their eyes were acts which affected prejudicially their wills in particular⁽⁶⁾.

Again, that persons who continued in a state of impenitence were free to have willed to repent is instanced by the fervent expression of desire which is ascribed to Almighty God by the Holy Psalmist (Ps. 81, 14). "Oh, that my people would have hearkened unto me!" It would be unnecessary expenditure of time to prove that this ejaculation, if properly translated (of which I see no reason to doubt), must imply that the people had the power to will in their own possession; and not to adduce any more evidences, their heavenly

Father, after he had been warning his ancient people most earnestly and lovingly against continuing in their sins, expostulates with them, in these emphatic and touching terms, than which nothing surely can more unquestionably declare their freedom of volition:—"Why *will* ye die, oh house of Israel?" (Ezek. xviii. 31.)

It is, as we observed, not contended that the unconverted, who persevere unto the end in impenitence, have free will at all periods of their lives. They may sin so grievously, and so long, that they provoke God to take away from them all disposition to turn to him. This appears to be the divine law—"So I gave them up, &c." (Ps. 81, 13.) (See also Rom. i. 28.) The great question is, simply, whether unconverted men ever have, at any stage of life, a freedom of volition to turn or not to God. Now, it is in vain for us to think of understanding more of the manner in which God works in the heart of man than he has revealed. And it is an objection, with some persons, to believing the freedom of the will in the unconverted that it is inexplicable in the mode of its possession. But this is really no objection whatever to the fact, if it is so represented in the pages of Scripture. The difficulty of its comprehension may have urged some persons to a different hypothesis. But that it should be

incomprehensible is not to be wondered at. It surely could never be denied by any but an unbeliever that it was impossible for God to give free will to unconverted man. It is indeed one of the wonderful works of his almighty power ; and we can explain it no more than we can explain any other of his operations. Let any man explain how it is that a seed put into the ground becomes a flower or a tree, and then he may be able to explain how will to do good may consist in the natural man with a disposition to evil—and this is no fanciful analogy. “The kingdom of God,” said our blessed Lord, “is as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.” We must indeed be elevated to much higher degrees of knowledge, before we can comprehend the true nature of the operations of the spirit which is in man. Nor is the difficulty of understanding it any objection to believing what we see recorded in Scripture, as the works of grace are only analogous in this respect to those of nature. The freedom of the will in unconverted persons is sufficiently revealed, and it is for us to remain satisfied with that information, without prying profanely into the deep things of God, and being vainly puffed up with human philosophy, and conceited imaginations.

CHAPTER VI.

REPROBATION.

THE doctrine of Calvin on the subject of this chapter may be briefly stated in its chief points under the following form:—That God created a large portion of mankind expressly for the purpose of everlasting damnation, and of his own glory;—that the souls, thus created, are those of the persons whom he does not elect to a certainty of everlasting life; and that this decree is passed by the Almighty irrespectively to man's wickedness. The author of the *Remarks* does not coincide exactly with Calvin, in his opinions of reprobation. He allows, indeed, that the words reprobate and reprobation are never used in Scripture, in the sense which many Calvinists have imposed upon them. Still it is necessary, for the interests of true religion, not to leave the subject in the state in which it is presented to our view in that volume.

He objects to the idea of reprobation being irrespective. He contends that it is dependent on

man's foreseen wickedness, (p. 720). That election to eternal life is of grace, and that the reprobation of all who are passed over, or not elected, is an act of mere justice, (p. 547). And that though it does not appear to him that either the original word, or our English word reprobates, is ever used in Scripture, as the opposite to elect; yet, as to reprobation, it is, he apprehends, a scriptural *idea* (for they who are not *chosen* must be *rejected*), but not a scriptural *word* in any sense, (p. 546).

To those who admit that the words literally expressive of reprobation in the Calvinistic sense of the term are not found in Scripture, a sufficient answer has already been given, as to their arguments in support of the doctrine that reprobation, according to the Gospel, signifies the abandonment by God to their natural state, without any possibility of salvation of all whom he does not irrespectively elect to a certainty of eternal life. Inasmuch as it has been shown that there exists no such doctrine in Scripture as irrespectively election to eternal life, and that all the unconverted, to whom the Gospel is preached, have been at liberty to receive it, there is an end at once of all pretences to the opinion that God has from the very first, by an act of justice, left to their natural perdition all those who were not elected to a state

of salvation. Reprobation to eternal death, must, under these considerations, signify the sentence to damnation, as a punishment for disobedience, which might have been avoided. But though a just statement of the doctrine of election is quite sufficient to correct the false view of reprobation, yet it will tend to confirm the truth of our theory, and prove the groundlessness of that of our opponents, if we go through the passages of the New Testament in which words occur most cognate with the term by which our subject is expressed.

The word reprobation is not found in the New Testament. The words most allied to it, and to be met with there, are reprobate and reprobates ; these words occur six times. There are two other passages where the original word is the same as that which has been rendered reprobate or reprobates. The number therefore of passages of this class for investigation is eight.

Previously to the introduction of these passages, it may be useful to observe that the word translated reprobate in the Bible does not strictly signify rejected, but rather such as is deficient in or destitute of proofs exhibited in the religious character, and will be rejected in consequence.

It will also elucidate our subject to observe, further, that the passages which speak of the

reprobate in express terms, do not constitute the whole of revelation on the subject. There are other passages to the purpose, some of which we shall produce.

The first of the eight texts I shall bring forward is from Rom. i. 28. The Apostle, in writing of the ancient heathen, says, “and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness,” &c., &c. Here is the strongest evidence of reprobation in the sense of abandonment, for we have, in addition to the idea of reprobation, received the revelation of their being given over by God to that state. But no authority is supplied for the doctrine that God gave them over to damnation, from all eternity, for original sin, without affording them any opportunity of repentance, and irrespectively of all their conduct on the earth; on the contrary, there is a clear intimation of the reverse of these doctrines. The heathen were given over in this world; and on account of their not *liking* to render to God the honour due unto his name, by which it appears that it was left to their discretion whether the worship of God should be observed. Similar doctrine occurs also twice in verses 23—26 of the same chapter.

In the 81st Psalm, 12, 13, we find another instance of as hopeless deliverance of God's people to the ways of the destroyer, as can possibly be expressed by reprobation. "My people (saith God) would not hear my voice, and Israel would not obey me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations." In this place it is evident that it is not only above, but contrary to what is written, to assert the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation. Again, in Acts vii. 42, there is a passage to the same effect; we read of the people's making a calf and worshipping it, and that then God *turned* and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars. (See also 2 Thess. ii. 11.)

An additional evidence is supplied by Matt. xiii. 12, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." It is sufficiently well ascertained that these words signify, that an utter dereliction is visited upon unconverted men by God, for their refusing to use the talents which he has already given them; doctrine which implies that the unconverted possess some talents, and that they are not reprobated for the sin which they inherit from their first progenitor. Heb. vi. 8, is much to the same purpose; the Apostle says, "that the earth which beareth thorns and briars

is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing. This is written in allusion to men who were in danger of denying the faith they held in Christ. He teaches that "there is little or no hope of their being recovered to the faith—but that they are like ground whose end is to be burned." This passage strongly supports the opinion that those men would be rejected or reprobate for their denial of the faith, and not for the transgression of their first parents.

At present we have noticed only two of the eight texts containing the words of the same origin as reprobation. (Rom. i. 28, and Heb. vi. 8.) The third which I select is that in which St. Paul says of himself—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway, or reprobate;" for the original word requires the alteration, if we insist on uniformity. Now, if we consider the passage itself, and other doctrines of the New Testament, particularly that which teaches, that men will be rejected at the last for their wicked lives; it is impossible to dispute that St. Paul feared, or rather knew, that according to these doctrines, he would be cast away, or reprobate at the day of judgment, if he lived after the flesh. Here, therefore, again reprobation would have been the consequence of disobedience to Christ in this

state of probation, and not irrespective. It is also evident in St. Paul's case, it would not have been the punishment of original sin, as that punishment in his case must have been remitted. Mr. Scott puts a construction on the passage, which is perfectly gratuitous, and similar to his interpretation noticed above of 2 Pet. i. 10.—He kept under his body, "*he in this way sought and possessed the assurance,*" that he should not be a castaway. The words plainly signify, that he kept under his body that he might not be lost. He might, and doubtless did, obtain an assurance that he should be saved, but this assurance must be a much less consideration than salvation itself.¹ That he might not be a castaway, must of course be an infinitely higher object of any man's desires, than the mere assurance in this world of such an issue of his spiritual labours. And this object of the Christian is constantly said in Scripture, to be secured by those who live according to the spirit, and are to be judged according to their works.

Three of our eight texts are taken from 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6, 7. Suffice it to say, that the Apostle is rebuking some of his Corinthian converts, who had not paid, as is too often the case, proper attention to remonstrances; and bids them examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, and prove their ownselves. "Know ye not," he

adds, "your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates. But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates." It is manifestly certain, that the reprobation here supposed and intimated, could not be irrespective, and was contemplated as taking place, if at all, in the present world, and not for original sin, but for disobedience.

I proceed now to Tit. i. 15. St. Paul, in his epistle to Titus i. 15, 16, says, "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." The Apostle here is giving a description of wicked men, which he ends by an allusion to their exhibiting no proofs whatever of the Christian virtues. It is evident that this passage cannot possibly lend any countenance to the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation; as it is perfectly silent on the point, that the reprobation mentioned in the text arose from the subjects of it being left by God in their natural state, by an act of preterition, in opposition to the Calvinistic election, much less does

tures and our Church concur in teaching that there is a contest between the flesh and the spirit even in the unconverted, "My spirit, said God, shall not always strive with man." This is said of man in his alienated state from God, a state in which he unhappily persevered. Our ninth article signifies in its first paragraph that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit in persons who are not renovated according to the Gospel. Now, on both these accounts it appears that there is some degree of the divine spirit in the unconverted, and as there is not always an utter destitution of grace in those over whom the flesh exercises dominion, it is not improbable that amongst the graces with which they are endowed should be comprehended that freedom of will, which appears to be one of the first necessary for the works of holiness.

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I know no fitter opportunity than the present for the introduction of Rom. vii., 15, 16, 18, 19, &c., of which I observed, in a former part of this volume, that, though quoted against us, I regard it as an evidence in our favour. In another work, I

have, I hope, advanced arguments sufficient to prove that St. Paul is here speaking of man under the prevalence of his nature. (*Christian Obedience*, pp. 52—60.) I think it is also very evident that it contains the plainest indications of a freedom of the will; for the subject of the Apostle's remark is clearly described as having a will to do good, and to avoid evil. It is certain, therefore, on the admission that it is of unconverted man that he discourses, that he has represented him in this place as gifted with a good will, and it is, I suppose, universally allowed that he has an evil one. All that this representative of unconversion in general appears to have required for the renovation of his nature, the reformation of his character, was the ability to act conformably to his desires, a power over his flesh, which is a victory that is alone given by God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and which, of course, is always to be distinguished from the mere will, either to do good or evil. ⁽⁵⁾

Evidences frequently occur in the Bible of the freedom of the will in the unconverted, and in persons who remained in that condition. For instance, (John xii., 35, 36). It is impossible, in any rational manner, to account for our Saviour's commanding his unbelieving hearers to walk, while they had the light, and to believe in the

light, that they might be the children of light, unless we understand that the people to whom he spoke were at liberty to be willing to comply with his injunctions; and yet, even on the supposition that v. 37 does not refer to them in particular, it is very probable, from the general conduct of the Jews, and our Saviour's withdrawing himself from them in a manner that indicates his disapprobation of his reception, that they did not embrace the faith.

It is not improbable, indeed, that the reflections of the sacred historian, contained in verses 37 and 39, apply particularly to the persons before whom our Saviour spake. In this case, it is certain that their infidelity continued after the delivery of his exhortation. This application of the 39th verse creates no difficulty in the question before us; it by no means follows from it that our Saviour enjoined belief on persons whom he knew to be utterly incapable of its attainment: we should be unwarrantably confounding *inclination* and *ability*, were we to affix this construction upon the passage. The inability expressed by the Evangelist denies not a freedom of the will. In our last quotation from Rom. vii., it was observed that the person, whose spiritual character and circumstances were described, was not *able* to perform his religious duties; yet he appears to

have enjoyed a freedom of volition. Thus it is evident the Jews, to whom our Saviour had directed his discourse in verses 35, 36, might have possessed the gift of that freedom, notwithstanding the inability under which they appear most unquestionably to have laboured.

But the supposition of a freedom of the will in the persons to whom our Saviour spoke on this occasion is not only perfectly allowable, and agreeable to revelation, but is, I would rather say, necessary for a right understanding of the whole passage. Indeed, we have been explicitly informed that the Jews, in general, persevered in their infidelity through the default of *willing* to believe. Our Saviour teaches this when he gives utterance to these expressions of complaint against them—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life; and how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not." "Oh that thou, even thou, hadst known the things which belong to thy peace! but *now* they are hid from thine eyes." The fault is laid by our Saviour on them for being unwilling, and it is only till the last that he says their salvation is entirely concealed from their sight, or not before that time that they seem to have been deprived of all will as well as power. Besides which, if we do not

believe in the liberty of the will of these Jews, we shall blasphemously charge some inconsistency on Christ in commanding his hearers to do that of which it was impossible they could take the least means towards the accomplishment; and, indeed, it appears to be perverseness of their wills that constituted the great difference between their case and its final infidelity, and that described in Rom. vii. of him who eventually obtained the victory, as Hammond has aptly observed on Mark, iv. 12. The Jews not being *able* to see *for want of light* through the obscurity of parables, was a punishment of their winking and not being *willing* to see; by which sentiment he of course understood the obduration of their hearts, and the closing of their eyes were acts which affected prejudicially their wills in particular⁽⁶⁾.

Again, that persons who continued in a state of impenitence were free to have willed to repent is instanced by the fervent expression of desire which is ascribed to Almighty God by the Holy Psalmist (Ps. 81, 14). "Oh, that my people would have hearkened unto me!" It would be unnecessary expenditure of time to prove that this ejaculation, if properly translated (of which I see no reason to doubt), must imply that the people had the power to will in their own possession; and not to adduce any more evidences, their heavenly

Father, after he had been warning his ancient people most earnestly and lovingly against continuing in their sins, expostulates with them, in these emphatic and touching terms, than which nothing surely can more unquestionably declare their freedom of volition:—"Why *will* ye die, oh house of Israel?" (Ezek. xviii. 31.)

It is, as we observed, not contended that the unconverted, who persevere unto the end in impenitence, have free will at all periods of their lives. They may sin so grievously, and so long, that they provoke God to take away from them all disposition to turn to him. This appears to be the divine law—"So I gave them up, &c." (Ps. 81, 13.) (See also Rom. i. 28.) The great question is, simply, whether unconverted men ever have, at any stage of life, a freedom of volition to turn or not to God. Now, it is in vain for us to think of understanding more of the manner in which God works in the heart of man than he has revealed. And it is an objection, with some persons, to believing the freedom of the will in the unconverted that it is inexplicable in the mode of its possession. But this is really no objection whatever to the fact, if it is so represented in the pages of Scripture. The difficulty of its comprehension may have urged some persons to a different hypothesis. But that it should be

incomprehensible is not to be wondered at. It surely could never be denied by any but an unbeliever that it was impossible for God to give free will to unconverted man. It is indeed one of the wonderful works of his almighty power ; and we can explain it no more than we can explain any other of his operations. Let any man explain how it is that a seed put into the ground becomes a flower or a tree, and then he may be able to explain how will to do good may consist in the natural man with a disposition to evil—and this is no fanciful analogy. “The kingdom of God,” said our blessed Lord, “is as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.” We must indeed be elevated to much higher degrees of knowledge, before we can comprehend the true nature of the operations of the spirit which is in man. Nor is the difficulty of understanding it any objection to believing what we see recorded in Scripture, as the works of grace are only analogous in this respect to those of nature. The freedom of the will in unconverted persons is sufficiently revealed, and it is for us to remain satisfied with that information, without prying profanely into the deep things of God, and being vainly puffed up with human philosophy, and conceited imaginations.

CHAPTER VI.

REPROBATION.

THE doctrine of Calvin on the subject of this chapter may be briefly stated in its chief points under the following form:—That God created a large portion of mankind expressly for the purpose of everlasting damnation, and of his own glory;—that the souls, thus created, are those of the persons whom he does not elect to a certainty of everlasting life; and that this decree is passed by the Almighty irrespectively to man's wickedness. The author of the *Remarks* does not coincide exactly with Calvin, in his opinions of reprobation. He allows, indeed, that the words reprobate and reprobation are never used in Scripture, in the sense which many Calvinists have imposed upon them. Still it is necessary, for the interests of true religion, not to leave the subject in the state in which it is presented to our view in that volume.

He objects to the idea of reprobation being irrespective. He contends that it is dependent on

man's foreseen wickedness, (p. 720). That election to eternal life is of grace, and that the reprobation of all who are passed over, or not elected, is an act of mere justice, (p. 547). And that though it does not appear to him that either the original word, or our English word reprobates, is ever used in Scripture, as the opposite to elect; yet, as to reprobation, it is, he apprehends, a scriptural *idea* (for they who are not *chosen* must be *rejected*), but not a scriptural *word* in any sense, (p. 546).

To those who admit that the words literally expressive of reprobation in the Calvinistic sense of the term are not found in Scripture, a sufficient answer has already been given, as to their arguments in support of the doctrine that reprobation, according to the Gospel, signifies the abandonment by God to their natural state, without any possibility of salvation of all whom he does not irrespectively elect to a certainty of eternal life. Inasmuch as it has been shown that there exists no such doctrine in Scripture as irrespectively election to eternal life, and that all the unconverted, to whom the Gospel is preached, have been at liberty to receive it, there is an end at once of all pretences to the opinion that God has from the very first, by an act of justice, left to their natural perdition all those who were not elected to a state

of salvation. Reprobation to eternal death, must, under these considerations, signify the sentence to damnation, as a punishment for disobedience, which might have been avoided. But though a just statement of the doctrine of election is quite sufficient to correct the false view of reprobation, yet it will tend to confirm the truth of our theory, and prove the groundlessness of that of our opponents, if we go through the passages of the New Testament in which words occur most cognate with the term by which our subject is expressed.

The word reprobation is not found in the New Testament. The words most allied to it, and to be met with there, are reprobate and reprobates ; these words occur six times. There are two other passages where the original word is the same as that which has been rendered reprobate or reprobates. The number therefore of passages of this class for investigation is eight.

Previously to the introduction of these passages, it may be useful to observe that the word translated reprobate in the Bible does not strictly signify rejected, but rather such as is deficient in or destitute of proofs exhibited in the religious character, and will be rejected in consequence.

It will also elucidate our subject to observe, further, that the passages which speak of the

reprobate in express terms, do not constitute the whole of revelation on the subject. There are other passages to the purpose, some of which we shall produce.

The first of the eight texts I shall bring forward is from Rom. i. 28. The Apostle, in writing of the ancient heathen, says, "and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness," &c., &c. Here is the strongest evidence of reprobation in the sense of abandonment, for we have, in addition to the idea of reprobation, received the revelation of their being given over by God to that state. But no authority is supplied for the doctrine that God gave them over to damnation, from all eternity, for original sin, without affording them any opportunity of repentance, and irrespectively of all their conduct on the earth; on the contrary, there is a clear intimation of the reverse of these doctrines. The heathen were given over in this world; and on account of their not *liking* to render to God the honour due unto his name, by which it appears that it was left to their discretion whether the worship of God should be observed. Similar doctrine occurs also twice in verses 23—26 of the same chapter.

In the 81st Psalm, 12, 13, we find another instance of as hopeless deliverance of God's people to the ways of the destroyer, as can possibly be expressed by reprobation. "My people (saith God) would not hear my voice, and Israel would not obey me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them follow their own imaginations." In this place it is evident that it is not only above, but contrary to what is written, to assert the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation. Again, in Acts vii. 42, there is a passage to the same effect; we read of the people's making a calf and worshipping it, and that then God *turned* and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, the sun, the moon, and the stars. (See also 2 Thess. ii. 11.)

An additional evidence is supplied by Matt. xiii. 12, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." It is sufficiently well ascertained that these words signify, that an utter dereliction is visited upon unconverted men by God, for their refusing to use the talents which he has already given them; doctrine which implies that the unconverted possess some talents, and that they are not reprobated for the sin which they inherit from their first progenitor. Heb. vi. 8, is much to the same purpose; the Apostle says, "that the earth which beareth thorns and briars

is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing. This is written in allusion to men who were in danger of denying the faith they held in Christ. He teaches that "there is little or no hope of their being recovered to the faith—but that they are like ground whose end is to be burned." This passage strongly supports the opinion that those men would be rejected or reprobate for their denial of the faith, and not for the transgression of their first parents.

At present we have noticed only two of the eight texts containing the words of the same origin as reprobation. (Rom. i. 28, and Heb. vi. 8.) The third which I select is that in which St. Paul says of himself—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway, or reprobate;" for the original word requires the alteration, if we insist on uniformity. Now, if we consider the passage itself, and other doctrines of the New Testament, particularly that which teaches, that men will be rejected at the last for their wicked lives; it is impossible to dispute that St. Paul feared, or rather knew, that according to these doctrines, he would be cast away, or reprobate at the day of judgment, if he lived after the flesh. Here, therefore, again reprobation would have been the consequence of disobedience to Christ in this

state of probation, and not irrespective. It is also evident in St. Paul's case, it would not have been the punishment of original sin, as that punishment in his case must have been remitted. Mr. Scott puts a construction on the passage, which is perfectly gratuitous, and similar to his interpretation noticed above of 2 Pet. i. 10.—He kept under his body, "*he in this way sought and possessed the assurance,*" that he should not be a castaway. The words plainly signify, that he kept under his body that he might not be lost. He might, and doubtless did, obtain an assurance that he should be saved, but this assurance must be a much less consideration than salvation itself.¹ That he might not be a castaway, must of course be an infinitely higher object of any man's desires, than the mere assurance in this world of such an issue of his spiritual labours. And this object of the Christian is constantly said in Scripture, to be secured by those who live according to the spirit, and are to be judged according to their works.

Three of our eight texts are taken from 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 6, 7. Suffice it to say, that the Apostle is rebuking some of his Corinthian converts, who had not paid, as is too often the case, proper attention to remonstrances; and bids them examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, and prove their own selves. "Know ye not," he

adds, "your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates. But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates." It is manifestly certain, that the reprobation here supposed and intimated, could not be irrespective, and was contemplated as taking place, if at all, in the present world, and not for original sin, but for disobedience.

I proceed now to Tit. i. 15. St. Paul, in his epistle to Titus i. 15, 16, says, "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." The Apostle here is giving a description of wicked men, which he ends by an allusion to their exhibiting no proofs whatever of the Christian virtues. It is evident that this passage cannot possibly lend any countenance to the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation; as it is perfectly silent on the point, that the reprobation mentioned in the text arose from the subjects of it being left by God in their natural state, by an act of preterition, in opposition to the Calvinistic election, much less does

it warrant the higher doctrine, that God created these men expressly for the glory of damnation.

It is very reasonable to infer from the passage itself, that these violators of the divine law continued defiled, and were reprobate in the manner described, because they were “unbelieving;” and when we take into consideration the revelations that have been afforded us, and that have been noticed in this and former chapters of this work, there can be no reasonable doubt that some such interpretation is to be adopted, and that their unbelief was imputable to themselves.

Similar remarks might be made on 2 Tim. 3, 8, the only remaining text of the eight in question. There is the same kind of silence of all authority for the Calvinistic doctrines, and the same admissibility of that which we have advocated.

Of the texts which are usually adduced in support of the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation; little, I conceive, need be added to the preceding inquiry. If any consideration of the text, John xii. 38, beyond what we have given in chap. v. and notes be desired, I would refer the reader to Whitby, on the passage in his *Commentary*, and in his *Discourse*.

Prov. xvi. 4, is sometimes cited in this matter—

“The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil,” as if it signified that the Lord had created wicked men for the express purpose of condemning them at the day of judgment.

I would first observe upon this text, that there is no authority for thinking that the “day of evil” here signifies the day of judgment; but on the contrary, much to authorise its interpretation, by a period of temporal calamity. The same Hebrew words are never used by the inspired writers, as far as I find in the sense of the day of final retribution. All the places which I can discover, are Psalm xlix. 5; Jer. xvii. 17, 18; Prov. xv. 15; Eccl. xii. 1; Amos vi. 3. In these are signified times of worldly affliction.

Secondly, the translation of this passage is, I believe, capable of improvement. Various amendments have been attempted,—Archbishop Tillotson proposes the following:—God hath ordained everything to that which is fit for it, and the wicked hath he ordained for the day of evil. (Sermon 143, i. 1.) Whitby’s version is—God made all things to answer to themselves (or aptly to refer one to another); he hath made the wicked for the evil day; by the latter clause *literally* intending, I suppose, though he has not so said,

he hath made the wicked “aptly to refer” to the evil day.

It may be presumption in me, with a very slender knowledge of the original language to select between the versions of a passage of those who have brought infinitely more erudition than myself to its examination; and much more so to attempt any improvement in their translations. But without assenting entirely to that of Whitby in point of *expression*, I am clearly of opinion that he has approached very closely to the true signification of the text, if I have interpreted his *meaning* correctly. I suppose the inspired writer to intend that there is, throughout the creation, a mutual fitness in its individual works, and that one example of this correspondence is the suitability of the “day of evil” to the condition of the wicked—as calculated for his correction. I may subjoin the acknowledgment of Mr. Scott, that Prov. xvi. 4, does not mean that God created wicked men expressly for everlasting damnation.

For 1 Pet. ii. 8, 9, see Macknight and Whitby. It may be shortly observed that the words in the Greek do not express the destination of the disobedient to their disobedience—but to stumbling at the word, a fate which they it may, or rather must, be supposed deserved.

Lastly, of Jude 4, which is quoted by our opponents, I shall say only that the Apostle's words signify that certain false teachers were fore-ordained on account of their falseness to the *punishment* which he subsequently describes.

OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION.

The regret which I feel at coming to a determination to omit all evidence of this important fact is much alleviated by the considerations that it is acknowledged by Mr. Scott, as indeed it must be by every intelligent Minister of the Church (see Church Catechism), that it has been ascertained almost as fully and satisfactorily by several writers as can be desired by its warmest advocates; that it is one of the least disputable of all the parts of the anti-Calvinistic system, and that it has been denied principally on account of those views of election and reprobation which we have endeavoured to refute, and of which, therefore, a refutation is almost a sufficient propitiative for the admission of the doctrine.

One other point is now to be considered, and that is, whether the doctrine of universal redemption is consistent with the doctrine of the atonement. The answer to this question is, that it is not. The atonement is a sacrifice of himself for the redemption of the world, and the doctrine of universal redemption is a doctrine which is inconsistent with the doctrine of the atonement.

CHAP. VII.

OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION.

THE regret which I feel at coming to a determination to omit all evidence of this important fact, is much alleviated by the considerations that it is acknowledged by Mr. Scott, as indeed it must be by every intelligent Minister of the Church (see *Church Catechism*), that it has been ascertained almost as fully and satisfactorily by several writers as can be desired by its warmest advocates ; that it is one of the least disputable of all the parts of the anti-Calvinistic system, and that it has been denied principally on account of those views of election and reprobation which we have endeavoured to refute, and of which, therefore, a refutation is almost a sufficient preparative for the admission of the doctrine.

CHAP. VIII.

OF PREDESTINATION.

PREDESTINATION, in its largest sense, according to the Calvinistic theory, is, I conceive, the eternal purpose of God that all events in the world should follow in a predetermined course, and that one portion of the human race should be prepared for the participation of everlasting glory, while the remainder were intended to be consigned to the torments of damnation. We are exclusively concerned, in our present inquiry, with that interpretation of the term which applies to the salvation or perdition of our own species; and on the assumption that our views of election and reprobation, and grace and freewill, are substantially correct, very little need be added to clear the doctrine of predestination from the most flagrant perversions.

It is quite evident that if God has made any decree at any time with respect to man's salvation, the mere period of its formation, abstractedly considered, is not of vital importance. The nature of the decree is the chief and most interesting point for investigation.

I will slightly notice the principal passages on

which the Calvinist founds his opinions. The most remarkable of them perhaps is that which occurs in Acts xiii. 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. In pursuit of that brevity which I have proposed to myself in this part of my subject, I forbear to examine the use of the word ordained and of the original terms from which it is translated. It is curious, however, to observe how various are those terms in the original for which that word is adopted—I shall content myself with remarking that the expression “eternal life” does not necessarily mean the enjoyment of everlasting happiness. There are several places in the New Testament, perhaps a fourth part of the whole number of instances of the use of these two words, in which it is sufficiently plain that they do not bear that signification—but rather a state which is introductory to eternal life, or doctrines which are preparatory of the soul for that condition. Such passages are John, v. 39; vi. 54; xvii. 13; John 1, 2; iii. 15; v. 13; v. 20. They therefore who believe that the being ordained to eternal life *must* most indisputably signify that the persons so ordained were predestined by God to a certainty of everlasting salvation, are forming a precipitate and unwarrantable judgment. It certainly may be replied, that the words under consideration, taken by themselves, might import that the men in question

were appointed for everlasting life in Heaven. And I am perfectly disposed to grant that the text individually proves nothing in our case, either one way or the other, as far as our remarks upon it have at present proceeded. We must indeed have recourse to other parts of Scripture for assistance to form our opinions. Now it is, I believe, always agreed by Calvinists that the predestination of the saved is invariably to the same object for which they are *elected*. If we refer then to our doctrine of election, we find that the elect were chosen for admission into a state of salvation in the present world. This doctrine enables us to interpret the text before us. It must agree with the doctrine of election rightly understood; and assuming that that doctrine has been already defined, we may pronounce that the persons spoken of were prepared by God for a faith which is conducive to the attainment of eternal felicity. It ought, in fact, to be noticed that the word *ordained* in this place, may mean only prepared in heart to receive the Gospel. The original word is certainly not that which signifies most exactly eternal predestination.

It may be advisable to add that if it be argued that it might be intended in the text, which we have reviewed, that they who are in a state of salvation in this world, may be understood to have commenced eternal life; it is sufficient to answer

that this can prove the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination only on the supposition of final perseverance, which has been shown to be contrary to the word of God.

Other texts on which considerable stress is laid by our opponents, are Rom. viii. 28; Eph. i. 4, 5; 2 Tim. i. 9; Eph. 3, 11. By these it appears that those who receive the Gospel are called according to God's eternal purpose. It is hence inferred that it was not the purpose of God to call those who reject the Gospel. But this does not follow from those texts. It was God's purpose in Christ, we are informed, to destroy the works of the devil, and to seek and to save the world, that which was lost, it is quite open, therefore, to our interpretation to understand that God is willing to call all men, but that those who obey the call, or receive the Gospel, must be the only persons who are called in such a manner as accords with the divine purpose.

If an appeal be made, as is often the case, to Acts ii. 47, in defence of the Calvinistic tenet, it is sufficient to remark that our translation in this place is not correct. The original does not describe such as were designed to be saved, but those who were already in a state of salvation.

Some dependence is placed by our adversaries on certain revelations respecting the foreknowledge

of God, though they are often considered to supply one of the most satisfactory solutions of the difficulty which has been introduced into our subject. In Rom. viii. 29, we read, "whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate;" and in 1 Pet. i. 2, we find Christians entitled "elect," according to the foreknowledge of God. "Thus," Bishop Tomline says, "predestination and election are founded on the foreknowledge of God, (Art. xvii.) The same opinion is expressed by Bishop Copleston, in his *Enquiry*, (page 214, Ed. 1821), by which it is signified, that God foresees who will obey, and who will disobey him, and therefore he predetermines them to opposite destinies. And in confirmation of this view of the matter, this interpretation was assigned to the term foreknew, in this place, by all the most ancient fathers of the Church, to the time of St. Austin. ⁽¹⁾.

Other learned men think, that in Rom. viii. 29, the Apostle intended, that by God's *foreknowing* those whom he predestined, that he *loved them previously*, or from all eternity, an interpretation founded, from the Greek, principally on the use of the same word in Rom. xi. 2, where it is contended, that it does not signify foreknowledge, but antecedent love. This is the opinion of Schleusner, particularly in opposition to Koppe.

Now I will briefly observe, that the word in dispute is literally significant of foreknowledge, that it is by a forced construction that it has been interpreted adversely to our views, that it occurs seven times only in the New Testament, according to the same authority, that in four places out of the seven, there is no idea of its signifying love; but it is always interpreted, I believe, by previous knowledge or destination, (2 Pet. iii. 17; Acts xxvi, 5; 1 Pet. i. 20; Acts ii. 23;) that in a fifth (1 Pet. i. 2,) there would be little pretext for interpreting it by everlasting love; and departing from its primitive construction, unless it were so understood in Rom. xi. 2, that it is far from *necessary* to interpret it in Rom. xi. 2, in that sense—that it is there capable of being understood as foreknowledge, agreeably to Macknight, and other commentators; that, therefore, if so understood, there is no reason in the passages themselves, much less any necessity for deviating from the plain meaning of the word in Rom. viii. 29, in contradiction, according to Whitby, of the unanimous voice of the most authoritative period of antiquity. And as it is certain, that he did foreknow in Rom. viii. 29, cannot be understood to signify *he predetermined*, without tautology; I do not myself perceive, how it can be reasonably taken, but in the acceptation which I specified in

the outset of our inquiry. But it may be remarked, in conclusion, that even if foreknowledge in Rom. viii. 29, and 1 Pet. i. 2, meant predetermination, or (it may be added) eternal love, that the Scripture is silent on its irrespectiveness. We are still at liberty, as far as we have proceeded, to suppose that predestination bears some reference to the foreseen character of its subjects ; and if we regard it as equivalent to election from everlasting, and are correct in our views of election to eternal life, it is by necessity conditional.

I have purposely omitted in the above observations, any but the shortest allusions to the arguments from the use of the radical word in the Old and New Testaments, as I do not think on minute inquiry, that it would be found at all to invalidate our conclusion, and as the disquisition necessary to decide the question would be extremely tedious, and to a treatise intended for general reading, inappropriate.

If positive arguments were wanted for the establishment of the opinion that the determination of God to elect or reprobate his creatures is not independent of human conduct ; they may be found in considerable numbers. I will particularize, as perhaps the most striking and convincing, Jeremiah, xviii. 7—10 ; Acts, vii. 41, 42. “ At what instant I shall speak concerning a kingdom to pluck

up and to pull down and to destroy it. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, *turn* from their evil, *I will repent* of the evil that I *thought* to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then *I will repent* of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them ;” and, secondly, Acts, vii. 41, 42. “ They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands—*then God turned* and gave them up to worship the Host of Heaven.” It were easy to declaim against the fearful precipitation of the Calvinistic doctrines, when they impute to the all-perfect Godhead such horrible attributes as could never have been conceived if men had studied the Scriptures with more caution and humility. (Compare also 1 Kings, xxi. 19—29.)

I cannot entirely pass over Art. XVII. of the Church. I may perhaps be able to introduce some novelty into the criticism of that much agitated formulary ; but I shall be satisfied if I show it to be agreeable to the doctrine which I have advocated.

Now, the first paragraph of that article, I have no hesitation in confessing, does appear to me, to give a description of predestination to life, as

being in few words the eternal purpose of God to bring the elect in Christ to everlasting salvation through Christ, and that therefore they who are thus predestinated do go on from glory to glory till they come to everlasting felicity. But notwithstanding this to me manifest and unavoidable construction, I am equally convinced that the article is not to be understood as teaching irrelative election, and that with which it appears most chargeable of all obnoxious doctrines, final perseverance, and I would observe that bringing this article, or any other, to a fair ordeal, is acting only on a principle which the compilers of the Liturgy themselves in effect advocate, for the present Prayer Book as well as its predecessors, that it be “such just and favourable construction as in common equity *ought to be allowed to all human writings, especially such as are set forth by authority.*” (Preface to P. B.)

The arguments which I shall adduce may be arranged under five divisions.

1st. The well known sentiments and connexions and conduct of him who presided over the Articles in their original formation ; the acknowledged sources from which many of them were derived in much of their phraseology—the slight changes which the 17th article in particular underwent from its first composition—the displeasure

which these formularies gave the Genevese Reformer—the recent revival of some of the Calvinistic doctrines at the period in question—and the dissatisfaction with the Articles in a subsequent reign expressed by Calvinistic theologians, must all incline those who have examined the history of the times strongly to the belief that the tenets of the Church were—if I speak only of *human* authority—of Lutheran much *rather* than Calvinistic extraction.

Those who wish to see Calvinism in the form of professions of faith may refer to the *Lambeth Articles*.

2ndly. It is perfectly certain on the mere perusal of the Article that as to Election nothing is said of its being irrelative, and that with respect to final perseverance, it is not asserted to happen in all cases without exception. It is allowable, therefore, as far as the expressions are concerned, to interpret them, as implying a relative election, and at least the possibility of ultimate apostasy. The writers seem not to have transgressed the law recorded by Ridley, *fearing to speak farther, yea almost none otherwise, than the very texte dothe, as it wer, lead them by the hand*.

3rdly. I have always regarded the first paragraph of the XVII. Article much in the light of

a paraphrase of Rom. viii. 29, 30. It was an idea which occurred to me previously to my ordination, and I see no reason whatever to change my opinion. It speaks of the stages in the religious life, in nearly the same order of succession, as the graces of God are mentioned in those two verses where alone, as far as I recollect, any specimen of such a composition is to be found in the Sacred Volume, I think it is not possible reasonably to doubt that the compiler of the Article had Rom. viii. 29, 30, in his mind as his prototype, when he drew up that part of this important formula. Now if this assumption be true, it is only fair to put if possible that sense upon this paragraph which belongs to the passage of Scripture of a portion of which it is an expanded form—on reading then Rom. viii. 29, 30, we immediately perceive that the predestination, according to a preceding interpretation, was not irrespective. We are therefore not only at liberty to exclude absolutism from the Article, but in justice under the necessity of so doing—a necessity which may be said to be further laid upon us by the expression “chosen in Christ.” Let us now consider what is the reasonable interpretation of this text (Rom. viii. 30) with regard to final perseverance. I have already made some comment on this verse. I would now merely add that I consider it to signify the course which

the Christian life of those who are elect unto obedience takes generally ; because the New Testament may be almost said to abound with the same kind of general language (John, xv. 3—(“ Judas to be excepted”)—Matt. vii. 17—(“ good fruit generally”)—2 Thess. iii. 4 compared with verse 11 ; 1 Cor. i. 5—8. (“ The contentious in the Church must be excluded”)—John, xx. 19 compared with 24) and because of the unscripturality of final perseverance. Now this general signification of Rom. viii. 30 it is of course equitable to transfer to the passage in our Article which appears to be its counterpart.

4thly. We have authority from the Article itself to regard it as worded in *general* terms. The last paragraph says, “ we must receive God’s promises, in such wise as they be *generally* (generaliter) set forth in Holy Scripture.” The most learned interpreters of our Articles have, as far as I have observed, regarded this clause as a modification of the apparently absolute language of the first paragraph. Mr. Strype, in his *Life of Whitgift*, says, App. b. IV., No. 25: “ The 17th Article, which treats of Predestination, is drawn up without any mention of absolute reprobation, and tells us that we must receive God’s promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture, which seems to have been done to prevent any

scruple which might arise to any Protestant against subscribing the said Articles (*Todd's Declarations of Reformers*, App. V.) The like caution, said Bp. Randolph, they have observed in those Articles relating to Predestination and Freewill, &c. They worded them in general terms, that persons who were of different persuasions in several particulars relating to them might yet subscribe as agreeing in the general doctrines there delivered. We subscribe to the same general sense, though, in explaining the particulars relating to it, we use that liberty of judgment which the Church hath purposely left us. (*Ibid.*) See also *Laurence's Bampton Lectures*, *Copleston's Enquiry*, and *Winchester's Dissertation*."

I think indeed that by help of the chapter on Predestination in the "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum," the precise signification of this clause, is easily discovered⁽²⁾. There can be no question that the Article consists in some parts of little more than passages of this chapter in an altered form. It appears to me, then, to be implied, even in the Article as well as the chapter alluded to, that, of course, there is a predestination to life and death, even of every individual, though (as it must be believed from other sources, and without contradiction in the Article itself), according to God's foreknowledge of every

man's conduct ; but that life and death are always assigned in Scripture in general terms to the good and the evil—and that men ought not to think so much whether they are themselves likely to be among the predestined to one or the other, as to labour to be conformed to God's laws, that the wicked are not to suppose, that, because they are wicked, they are therefore of necessity incorrigible and foredoomed to inevitable damnation, and that the elect can only feel "*their faith of eternal salvation greatly established and confirmed*," by observing their spiritual improvement—that they have not *to presume* on the *absolute certainty* of their everlasting happiness, but "in their doings" to follow "that will of God which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God." (See the close of the Article.)

The chapter in the "Ref. Legg. Ecc." includes the good and the evil. The Article is confined in words to the former.

It may be added that the allusion to general terms in the conclusion of the Article is very suitable to the course of life, which, in general terms, according to Romans, viii. 30, is said to proceed from one degree of glory to another, to its termination in everlasting felicity.

But, Fifthly. Another mode of interpretation is derived from the body of the Prayer Book. It

must be intuitively evident that the Volume sanctioned by the Clergy cannot in their opinion contain inconsistent doctrines, but if there could be any doubt of the legitimacy of testing one part of the book by another, we have the plainest and strongest declarations of our opponents to effect its complete removal. (See two long extracts from Overton and Presbyter in the beginning of Dean Kipling's Treatise, entitled, *The Articles of the Church of England proved not to be Calvinistic.*)

I shall apply the proposed criterion only to the question of final perseverance, and it will be quite sufficient to shew that it is not a tenet of the Church, and therefore not the doctrine of the 17th Article, by referring simply to two of the prayers of her Liturgy. The first of these is the following passage in the Burial Service: "Suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from thee." This is surely admitting the possibility of *final* defection. I find from Archbishop Laurence that the Calvinists endeavour to get rid of this difficulty by asserting that these words only relate to a fall from a *fictitious* faith. The Archbishop has referred to the origin of this prayer (a German Hymn) in refutation of this objection, and has observed besides "to consider a fall from God as meaning a fall from an ideal faith in God," is a species of interpretation in itself not easily

admissible. (Note Sermon VIII., p. 187—6.) I would rather say that it is extremely unreasonable to imagine that our Church would pray at all, certainly with all her solemnity of language, not to fall only from a *fictitious* faith. It is not of the slightest consequence, I conceive, that any men should fall from *fictitious* faith: and those whose love of Calvinism allows them to maintain, she would invoke the Deity in one of her sublimest passages to prevent a matter of perfect indifference, appear to me to bring the greatest discredit upon their understanding or their integrity. The prayer under consideration is, I am thoroughly persuaded, one that can never be explained to our disadvantage.

The second authority I notice is the Collect for the fourth Sunday after Trinity, where the Church prays that her members may so pass through things temporal, that they finally lose not the things eternal—a prayer for the prevention of final apostasy implies a belief in its possibility.

CONCLUSION.

REASON, Scripture and the Church of England, according to the foregoing examination, concur in discountenancing the Calvinistic doctrines of Election and Reprobation. Election is neither absolute, referable immediately to eternal life, nor irreversible; but has respect to the use which men make of their talents, regards primarily the membership of a spiritual body on earth, and is capable of revocation—the proof of the grant of the privilege being holiness and righteousness of life, in those who are sufficiently advanced in years, to exhibit such evidence of its existence. Reprobation is also, in its primary signification, a rejection of men from this present state of salvation, on account of their voluntary perverseness. These doctrines imply no injustice—no partiality; they “vindicate the ways of God to man.” And this view of the whole matter, it is deserving of remark, argues the propriety of those exhortations and commandments which the ministers of the Church have so commonly “divided” to their people; and by which all men, without exception, are directed to use the powers of pleasing God, whether great or small, of which they may be in possession; it being to be understood that none

are entirely excluded from the applicability of such addresses to their own particular circumstances, but those in a state of dereliction brought on by provocations of intolerable obstinacy and malignity.

The infinite mercies of God would be most lamentably understated, with reference to our subject, if it were not observed, that so far from the narrow election of the Calvinist being agreeable to the truth, it is demonstrable from Scripture that the heathens themselves, who are ignorant of the revelation of Christ, may, notwithstanding their spiritual darkness, be admitted, for his sake, into a state of future blessedness, according as they obey the dictates of the law which is written on their hearts. Let not, however, this salvability of the pagan, even in his comparative destitution, be supposed, to vacate in any degree, our obligation to obey the command which was given to the Apostles, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and thus to do our utmost to elevate the whole human race to the highest point of spiritual excellence; neither let the wretchedness of *his* condition divert our attention from the more deplorable state of practical infidelity in nominally Christian lands; nor while Calvin acknowledges that God indeed affirms that he wills the conver-

sion of all men, let us impute, with him, a prevaricating sense to our heavenly Father's most gracious intimation (¹); but make indeed to every rational creature the offers of divine favour—unchecked by the cold and miserable calculation, that most individuals were never intended for the smallest interest in the Apostolic commission—but endeavouring, both in regions where light is already diffused, as well as those which darkness overspreads, that no one immortal soul shall be abandoned to the power of evil, without an industrious inculcation, in all dependence on God's grace, of those evangelical truths which may give the largest practicable efficiency to his universal benevolence—the mercy over all his works; remembering that it is to be hoped that scarcely any of our hearers have continued impenitent in such a manner, as to need to consider themselves already excluded completely from the benefit of our invitations, and feel that they are restricted from all power of exertion; but that every unconverted man be advised and encouraged not to despair of his ability to make at least some effort towards commencing the work of his Salvation, which, however, it behoves him to commence, and to conduct with all the strength which God may yet afford; for fear, through procrastination, he fails of its performance—a fear which is the

more awful the longer he provokes God by his delays, and the more imperious become his evil passions by indulgence; and remembering too that if we are ever so zealous disciples of the Lord, we must not foster any spirit of pride, and any recklessness of sin, in esteeming ourselves the sons of God above all possibility of disinheritance, lest we fall by transgression into a condition worse than our first; but cherish in our hearts and minds a constant sense of humility, which disposes us not to be presumptuous, in arrogating exclusively the right understanding of the Gospel, and viewing our opponents with a kind of contemptuousness; but rather, if possible, to suspect, at least, that others may be better informed upon that subject, and be walking more according to knowledge than ourselves, and thus to pursue our inquiries more carefully and more prudently into the will of the one God and Father of us all, and to strive more diligently to make our calling and election sure.

NOTES.

For the Translations of Calvin from Bishop Tomline, see the *Refutation of Calvinism*. Cadell. Sixth Edition. 1812.

CHAP. I.

Page 3. Note (¹).

GOD, by an eternal immutable counsel, once appointed those whom he should hereafter will to take into salvation, those moreover whom he should will to devote to destruction. We assert that this Counsel, with respect to the Elect, was founded in his gratuitous mercy—without any regard to human worth, but that the approach to life is precluded to those whom he assigns to damnation, by his just indeed and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment.—*Calv. Inst.*, Book III., Ch. 21, Sect. 7.—(*Tomline's Refutation*, 539.)

Therefore, if we cannot assign a reason why He (God) thinks his own worthy of mercy, except because it so pleases Him ; neither shall we have any other ground for his reprobating others, except his will.—*C. I.* iii., 22, 11.—*T. R.* 539.

Those whom God passes over, he reprobates, and for no other reason, except that he chooses to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates to his sons.—*C. I.* iii., 23, 1.—*T. R.* 540.

Page 3. Note (²)

He (God) so ordains by his counsel and will, that some among men should be born devoted to certain death from the womb, to glorify his name by their destruction.—*C. I.* iii., 23, 6.—*T. R.* 540.

That the reprobate do not obey the word of God, when explained to them, will be rightly imputed to the wickedness and maliciousness of their own hearts, provided it be at the same time added that they are therefore addicted to this wickedness, because they are raised up by the just but inscrutable judgment of God, to illustrate his glory by their damnation.—*C. I.* iii., 24, 14.—*T. R.* 545.

Page 3. Note (3)

After Christ asserted that the disciples who were given to him belonged to God the Father, he soon after adds, “I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.” (John xvii. 9.) Whence it happens that the whole world does not belong to its Creator, except that grace saves *a few* (*non multos*) persons from the curse and anger of God and eternal death who would otherwise have perished, but it leaves the world in its destruction to which it was destined.—*C. I.* iii., 22, 7.—*T. R.* 539.

Many, indeed, as if they wished to repel odium from God, so acknowledge election, that they deny any one is reprobated; but too ignorantly and childishly; since election itself would not stand, unless opposed to reprobation. God is said to separate those whom he adopts to salvation. It would be more than folly to say that others gain by chance, or acquire by their own industry, that which election alone confers upon *a few*.—*C. I.* iii., 23, 1.—*T. R.* 539, 540.

OBSERVATION.—When I first read, with any attention, the *Institutes of Calvin*, on certain doctrines, I was somewhat surprised at the crudity of argument, and boldness of assertion with which his work abounds. The former of the two passages I have quoted in this note, I am unwilling to pass unnoticed. Calvin seems to have supposed that our blessed Lord signified that he never prayed for any but his disciples, and then draws a frightful conclusion from his assumption. I would briefly observe, that his interpretation is not only,

not certainly true, as it ought to be, to warrant such an inference, but is most unquestionably false. Christ merely informs us, that, in that one instance, he prayed only for his disciples, and not for the world—and we know he prayed for others at other times—for example : he prayed even for his crucifiers—" Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

CHAPTER II.

Page 5. Note (¹).

See my *Refutation of Nonconformity*, ch. ii., pp. 7—9.

CHAPTER III.

Page 17. Note (¹).

The idea of rejection must be excited in the mind with that of Election, however understood. *Scott's Remarks*, p. 546.

Calvin very justly avows the same opinion : " Those whom God passes over he reprobates." *C. I.* iii. 23. 1.—*T. R.* 540.

Many indeed so acknowledge Election that they deny any one is reprobated but too ignorantly and childishly, since Election itself would not stand, unless opposed to reprobation. *C. I.* iii. 23. 1.—*T. R.* 539.

Page 18. Note (²).

See the note (³), page 3, of this volume.

Page 19. Note (³).

Mr. Scott evidently is speaking of man as an agent in the full possession of his ordinary faculties ; for in chap. I., §§ 2 and 5 ; in which two sections, the passages cited in the text are adduced, he is controverting Bishop Tomline's

opinion, that men in their years of discretion, previous to conversion, are not utterly depraved.

I have given Mr. Scott's translation of *quàm longissimè* in the Article.

Page 20. Note (4).

For all men are not created in an equal condition, but eternal life is pre-ordained to some ; eternal damnation to others.—*C. I. iii. 21. § 5.—T. R. 538.*

Page 21. Note (5).

We were elected from eternity before the formation of the world from no merit of our own, but according to the purpose of the divine pleasure.—*C. I. iii. 15. § 5.—T. R. 537.*

Therefore, if we cannot assign a reason why he (God) thinks his own worthy of mercy, except because it so pleases him ; neither shall we have any other ground for his reprobating others, except his will.—*C. I. iii. 22. § 11.—T. R. 539.*

We assert that this counsel, with respect to the Elect, was founded in his gratuitous mercy, without any regard to human worth, but that the approach to life is precluded to those whom he assigns to damnation by his just indeed and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment.—*C. I. iii. 21. § 7.—T. R. 539.*

Page 21. Note (6).

Those whom God passes over he reprobates, and for no other reason except that he chooses to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates to his sons.—*C. I. iii. 23. § 1.—T. R. 540.*

A very particular statement, for one who had confessed the judgment is incomprehensible. See Note (5).

Page 25. Note (7).

The Bishop of Lincoln asked : “ What would be more unjust than that those should be punished who are not able to

do what ought to be done? or that those should suffer whose actions are not in their own power?"

Mr. Scott replied. Natural inability, or incapacity to obey, would certainly render punishment unjust; but does total disinclination form an obstacle of the same kind? Our actions are in our own power:—that is, a man has it in his power to do or not to do this or the other action. He may choose whether he will labour for a maintenance, or have recourse to fraud or rapine, but *the state of his heart* will influence his choice, &c. &c. Every master (he adds by way of illustration) distinguishes between the incapacity of a *sick* and that of a *slothful* servant.—*Remarks*, pp. 95, 96.

Sometimes, indeed, our reasoning is quashed without any argument, or show of argument, at all.

The reprobate want to be considered as excusable in sinning, because it is impossible for them to avoid the necessity of sinning, especially since a necessity of this kind is imposed upon them by the ordinance of God. But we say that there is no reason for their being excused on this ground, since the ordinance of God by which they complain that they are destined to destruction, has its own equity, unknown indeed to us, but most certain.—*C. I.* iii. 23. § 9.

Page 25. Note (8).

Mr. Scott has indeed assisted in evincing the absurdity of the distinction contended for between natural and moral inability.

He quotes Article X. :—"The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works—to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God, by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." Mr. Scott immediately afterwards supposes that in this sense disobedience is inevitable, without preventing grace. He makes

this supposition, or rather acknowledgment, in order to pave the way for his assignment of the cause of the fact which he thus confesses. We have no concern at this moment with the *cause*—we need now only to look at the acknowledged unavoidable-ness of sin in the non-elect without the preventing grace of God. Is not this unavoidableness of sin as effectual a hindrance to conversion as natural inability? Yet he allows that natural inability would render punishment unjust. It follows, therefore, as this moral inability renders sin equally inevitable, it must involve punishment in the same injustice.

Page 26. Note (9).

This opinion is elicited by the following question of the Bishop of Lincoln—"Could a just and merciful God endow men with the admirable faculties of perception and reason; place them in a transitory world, abounding with enjoyments and temptations, and by an arbitrary and irreversible decree, deny them the means of escaping everlasting torment in a life to come!" Mr. Scott replies—"If God had made man as he now is, this reasoning might be admitted; but if God made man in his own image, and pronounced him very good, and if he by wilful apostasy and rebellion became very wicked, even so as to resemble the devil in all the grand outlines of his character; and if one generation after another wilfully repeats, and perpetuates the original rebellion, the whole of the argument falls to the ground.—*Remarks*, p. 626.—Also, if disobedience is inevitable, the fall of Adam, and our fall in him, has made it so; not any act or decree of God." P. 591.

Calvin, in one place, has dropped an expression, which amounts to the same doctrine, that Adam inflicted the depravation of nature upon himself—"Till by destroying himself he corrupted his good qualities."—*Inst.* i., 15, § 8; but he has elsewhere been more guarded and correct, at least with respect to his posterity; for instance—"I confess, indeed, that all the sons of Adam fell into that miserable condition,

in which they are now bound by the will of God ;”—and that is what I asserted at the beginning, that we must always return to the sole determination of the divine will.—*Inst.* iii., 23, § 4.

CHAPTER IV. PART II.

Page 44. Note (').

Rom. ix. 6.—“For they are not all Israel which are of Israel.” Mr. Scott understands the passage thus—They who are of Israel are not all of them Israel ;—other commentators in this manner—All who are of Israel, these are not Israel ; or, they who are of Israel, are not the whole of Israel. The difference of meaning is very great, and sufficiently striking. I assent to the latter interpretation ; for reasons involved in the following brief remarks, independently of other considerations.

1. I think the *original* must be so understood.

The construction is somewhat singular. I recollect no collocation of words like it in the New Testament, except in the 8th verse of the same chapter, where the version is made agreeably to the one which I have preferred in verse 6, and is evidently correct.

2. Were Mr. Scott’s interpretation the true one, the sentence concerning Abraham in verse 7, beginning with “neither,” would appear to be tautology.

3. Mr. Scott’s interpretation would omit the Gentiles in the two remarks of verses 6 and 7. Now, St. Paul includes the Gentiles in his *argument*, (ix. 24, 25, 26, 30, 31.) *Our* interpretation does the same. Add to which, St. Paul’s argument refers to the world under its two grand divisions of Jews and Gentiles, which Mr. Scott’s interpretation of verse 6 would render a very *inapt illustration* of that passage, while ours makes it most appropriate.

It ought to be observed that the opinion expressed in the text does not militate against the election of all children baptized in infancy, and of all true members of the Church. The Church is, in short, an Israel within the Israel of the Gentiles.

Page 46. Note (²).

Mr. Scott indeed does not extend his observations in page 544 beyond Rom. ix. (10—13); but I think he cannot be fairly chargeable with maintaining the opinion, that any part of the passage in dispute is more than an illustration of the election signified according to his theory in verse 6. Yet a *temporal* election *illustrative* of an *eternal* one is paradoxical.

Page 58. Note (³).

Malachi, 1, 2, 3. ἡγάπησα τὸν Ιακώβ, τὸν δὲ Ησαῦ ἐμίσησα.
Rom. ix. 13. As it is written. Τὸν Ιακώβ ἡγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ησαῦ ἐμίσησα. For ever, Mal. 1, 4, not, Eternally. See Gen. xiii. 15, and many other places.

Page 59. Note (⁴).

Though strictly speaking the argument in the text may be legitimately confined to the interpretation of the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, I am not willing to leave entirely without notice one scriptural fragment which relates to Esau, and might, if unexplained, prevent that unhesitating assent to the doctrine we have advanced, to which I believe it is entitled. I mean Heb. xii. 16, 17, looking diligently lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright, for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

I shall not think it necessary to enter into a laboured and

minute exposition of this extract. I will merely observe, that I believe it is capable of proof, that though Esau is stigmatised by St. Paul as profane, yet that there is no reason for extending the application of the term in this place, beyond the sale of his birth-right, by which he forfeited to Jacob, among other privileges, his title to be the father of God's chosen people, and to be the lineal progenitor of the mother of the Saviour of the world. And with respect to his finding no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears; it is equally demonstrable, that the repentance signified, is not such as is necessary to salvation, and that it is not intended that Esau was incapable of this conversion; though he shewed one of the most affecting symptoms of true penitence; but that the repentance related to the blessing of Esau by his father; and that it was repentance in the mind of his father, not in his own, that he thus ineffectually attempted to attain.

CHAPTER IV. PART IV.

Page 80. Note (').

The remarks in the text strongly confirm the opinion that the illustration concerns verses 6 and 7, and is not restricted, as Mr. Scott supposed, to verse 6 only.

CHAPER IV. PART V.

Page 102. Note (').

When these reasons are assigned for the dispensations of God's mercy, it is not to be imagined that they do not originate entirely from his grace, but that they are granted according to circumstances, without detracting from the gracious nature of those blessings in the least.

It may be noted with respect to our forthcoming inquiry into the doctrine of final perseverance, that it is not to be

expected that it is founded in truth, because Election is described as temporal. Mr. Scott probably was disposed to believe in final perseverance from his view of Election.

CHAPTER IV. PART VI.

Page 129. Note (¹).

See Hammond on the entire passage.

Page 134. Note (²).

This critic gives the following as his reason for preferring “since” or “because” to “if so be” in the passage before us;—viz., that the discourse of the Apostle turns upon those disciples with whose spirit the spirit of God witnesses that they are the sons of God; and that they are the sons of God, because or since they suffer with Christ, that they may be glorified together. Now, the last part of this account of the matter is incorrect. It clearly appears, on reading Rom. viii., 14—17, that certain disciples of Christ are not called sons of God, because they suffer with Christ, that they may be glorified together, but because they are led by the spirit of God, and because they have received the spirit of adoption. The clause of verse 17 in dispute refers to being joint heirs with Christ.

CHAPTER V.

Page 140. Note (¹).

“We have already observed that the metaphysical disputes about Necessity and Free Will had been long ago laid aside by the principal German reformers, with whom

Cranmer corresponded, who had found, by experience, that their views ought to be confined to what is revealed in Scripture. It was not then because the subject was *new*, and because their minds had not yet been raised to the contemplation and study of these abstract inquiries that they took this limited ground; but they had run through, and exhausted the controversy, and found that the only resting place, after these wearisome flights, was in the revealed word of God."—*Bp. Copleston's Inquiry*, p. 196.

Page 142. Note (²).

Peccatum originis est vitium et depravatio naturæ cujuslibet hominis ex Adamo naturaliter propagati; quâ fit ut ab originali justitiâ quàm longissimè distet.

Page 151. Note (³).

Calvin has somewhere words to this effect. If our opponents allow that the will of man to do good is a work of grace, why do they contend with us? A question which, if I mistake not, referred to the whole controversy.

Page 152. Note (⁴).

Augustus Toplady, in *The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity*, asserted in opposition to Mr. John Wesley's Tract on that subject. Chap. IV.

Page 166. Note (⁵).

This distinction, noticed by Archbishop Laurence, in his *Bampton Lectures*, is founded on common sense and Scripture. See Gal. v. 17, and other places.

Page 169. Note (⁶).

The words of our Saviour, in Mark iv., 12, 13, appear, when understood without reference to any but the English

idiom, to bear a very harsh construction. There is no necessity, however, to assign them any interpretation in the least degree conflicting with the doctrines advocated in the body of this volume, as will be evident from the following considerations.

Several methods have occurred of interpreting the part of the passage which has been pronounced Calvinistical, either of which is sufficient to show that we are at liberty to give it a different signification. I will produce three.

1. The first is one which is similar to that mentioned by Bishop Lowth on Isaiah, vi. 10. "The words that they may, &c.," may signify the *event* rather than the purpose.

Bishop Lowth (Isaiah, vi. 10) observes—The Prophet speaks of the event, the fact as it would actually happen, not of God's purpose and act by his ministry;—(see the passage). The Prophets are in other places said to perform the thing which they only foretel. "Lo! I have given thee a charge this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant." (Jer. i. 10.) And Ezekiel says, "When I came to destroy the city,"—that is, as it is rendered in the margin of our version—"when I came to prophecy that the city should be destroyed." (Ezek. xliii. 3.)

This idiom is not uncommon. (Matt. x. 34, 35.) "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I am not come to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother," &c. &c. Also, Hosea, viii. 4. "Of their silver and gold have they made them idols, that they might be cut off." And Micah, vi. 16. "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the House of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation," &c. &c.

2. The second is supported by the authority of Hammond. He says these words—"that seeing, &c.," note the obduration of the Israelites, which fell on them from God's desertion, as a punishment of their not making use of the

talents which he had given them, and so this verse is answerable and parallel to Matt. xiii. 15 ; or the end of that place in Isaiah vi.—9, 10, recited and set down at large in St. Matt. ; but here, and so also Luke, viii. 10, and John xii. 40, epitomized and summed up, “lest they should see,” &c. And, therefore, from the importance (*i. e.* import) of the whole place in Isaiah and Matthew, the sense of it (here where ’tis shortly recited), must be taken, viz., that upon their shutting their eyes—that is voluntary obduration of heart against God—God withdraws his grace ; which otherwise he would have afforded them, and doth afford others. To which ’tis consequent that they see not at all. Agreeably to that of Procopius on Isaiah, p. 102—“The power of seeing was present to them from the grace of Him that was seen.” Their not seeing was an accident, or consequent of their shutting their eyes. And so here their not being able to see for want of light (the obscurity of those parables in which God spake to them) was a punishment of their winking, and not being willing to see.—*Hammond.* Mark, iv. 12.

3. Whitby’s comment is as follows :—Luke viii. 10. Mark iv. 12. Here, say some, this is plainly given as the reason why our Saviour spake to them without in parables, viz., “that they may not perceive or understand or be converted.” But to take off this pretension, it is sufficient to observe that the words in St. Mark and Luke are only an abbreviation or short hint of what St. Matthew saith was spoken by our Lord more fully ; for Christ might say what St. Mark and Luke relate, and yet say more than they relate, as St. Matthew doth assure us he did ; but then St. Matthew could not have given us his discourse more fully, unless our Lord had spoken it more fully than it is related by St. Mark and Luke—whence it must follow, that the relations of Mark and Luke must be allowed to be deficient—*i. e.*, not to contain all that our Saviour said on this occasion, and therefore must be filled up, or rendered entire, by the addition of the words recorded in St. Matthew. Since then, St. Matthew doth expressly tell us from the mouth of Christ,

he therefore spake to them in parables, because they seeing, would not see, or did not see, and hearing, did not understand; and that they therefore did not see, hear, and understand, because their heart was waxed gross, and their ears heavy, and they had closed their eyes, lest they should see and hear, and be converted; it seemeth evident that the words of St. Mark and Luke must be filled up, or made entire thus.—“To others (of the Jews) speak I in parables, because they seeing, see not, and hearing, do not understand, for their hearts are waxed gross; and their ears heavy, and their eyes have they closed, that seeing, they may see, and not perceive, and hearing, they may hear, and not understand, lest they should be converted.” And though doubtless this sad effect of their not hearing and seeing, viz., lest they should be converted, was not intended by them; yet, since it was the natural issue of their shutting their eyes against the light, it fitly is ascribed to them; as when Prophet Hosea saith, chap. viii. 4,—“Of their silver and gold have they made them idols, that they might be cut off; and the Prophet Micah, chap. vi. 16.—“For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the House of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation.” A like expression to this we find in Isaiah, lxiii. 17.—“Why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways? Why hast thou hardened our hearts that we should not fear thee?” And yet this is the Church’s prayer, imploring God’s mercy, and the removal of his judgments, viz., the long oppression of the heathens, which was a temptation to them to depart from him, and to cast off his fear; and therefore, shows they were no otherwise hardened by God, than as these providences were a strong temptation to them to cast off his service.

It might be shown further by quotations from Scripture, that the people are hardened and blinded, partly in consequence of their own acts; agreeably to that which has already been remarked of Pharaoh, and will be further seen in treating of reprobation.

CHAPTER VI.

Page 178. Note (¹).

If the assurance which may be attained were infallible and indissoluble, the observation in the text as to the comparative importance of the assurance and of eternal salvation would be invalidated. But the assurance is not of this description. The unscripturality of final perseverance is alone a proof of it. I have endeavoured to give a short account of assurance in my *Course of Christian Obedience*. This question affects not however the gratuitous nature of Mr. Scott's interpretation of 2 Pet. i, 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

Page 189. Note (¹).

All antiquity, till the time of St. Austin, do, with one consent, concur in the interpretation of Pseud. Ambrosius on the place, "those whom he foreknew would be devoted to his service, he chose to the reward promised to them; those whom he foreknew to be worthy to be called."—*Whitby's Discourse*, p. 73. Ch. III., sec. 7.—*Vide* Koppe in loc.

Page 197. Note (²).

I cite from Chapter 22 de Hæresibus, the following passage (its concluding sentences), principally in support of the meaning I have assigned to *generaliter* in the Article:—

Quapropter omnes nobis admonendi sunt, ut in actionibus suscipiendis ad decreta prædestinationis se non referant, sed universam vitæ suæ rationem ad Dei leges accommodent cum et promissiones bonis et minas malis, in Sacris Scripturis

generaliter propositas contemplentur. Debemus enim ad Dei cultum viis illis ingredi et in illâ Dei voluntate commorari quam in Sacris Scripturis patefactam esse videmus.

CONCLUSION.

Page 203. Note (¹).

God indeed affirms that he wills the conversion of all men, and he destines his exhortations in common to all. Their efficacy, however, depends upon the spirit of regeneration.... Whomsoever God wills to save from destruction, those he quickens with the spirit of regeneration.—*C. I. iii., 3, § 21. T. R. 536.*

ERRATA.

Page 30, last line, for “*another*” read “*any other.*”

Page 63, line 26, for “*India*” read “*England.*”

Page 82, line 13—2 Tim. ii. 10 has been placed, through inadvertency, in an improper class, to the injury of our theory. It and the two following verses contain an argument against the absolute and infallible election to everlasting life in Heaven, which deserves a conspicuous station among the proofs of its untruth. A plausible objection might be, and possibly may have been, taken : that “the elect” signify those who are designed for salvation from all eternity—but to whom the Gospel had not been preached, or by whom it had not at present been received.

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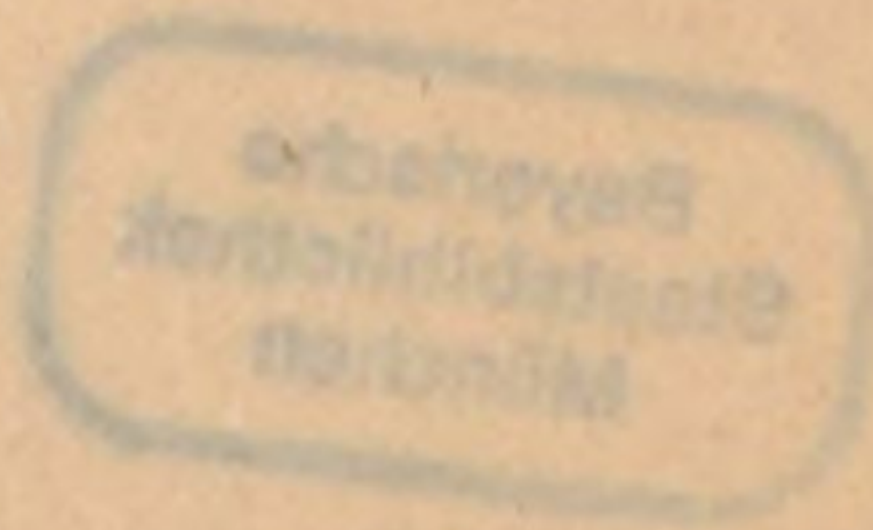
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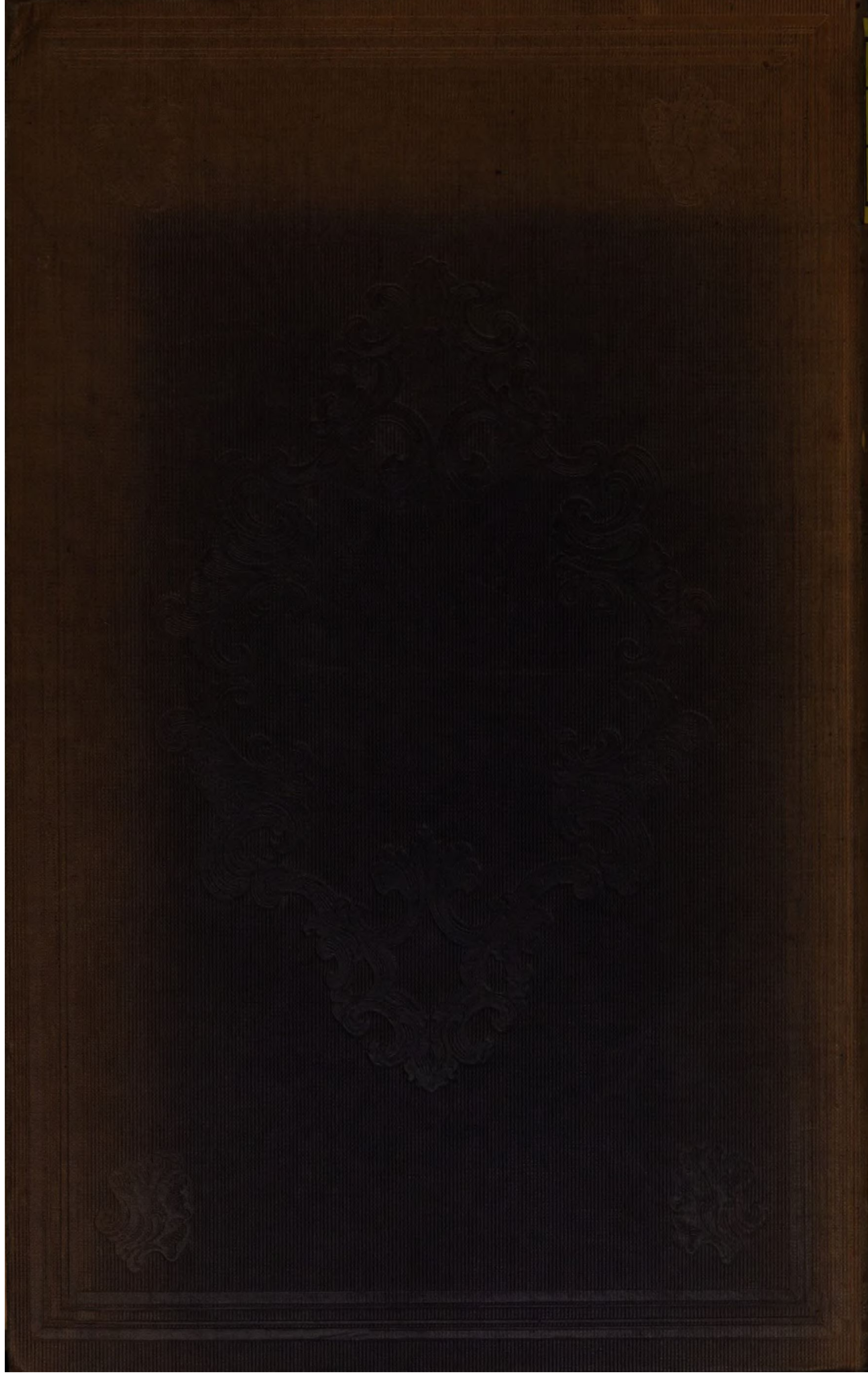
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